WITH GOD IN MY GARDEN

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BEING FIFTY-TWO SUNDAY MORNING ADDRESSES TO CHILDREN

BY

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To

THOSE WHO IN MY EARLIEST DAYS

TAUGHT ME TO SEE GOD

—MY FATHER AND MOTHER—

THIS BOOK IS LOVINGLY DEDICATED

PREFACE

THESE addresses have been delivered to children on Sunday mornings as part of the regular church worship.

The children have ranged in age from five to fifteen years. Some of these addresses are therefore especially for the youngest and some especially for the oldest, while the majority are for those of an average age.

L. E. DOWSETT.

HAVANT.

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GOD'S GARDEN

THE Lord God planted a garden
In the first white days of the world;
And set there an angel warden,
In a garment of light enfurled.

So near to the peace of Heaven,
The hawk might nest with the wren;
For there in the cool of the even,
God walked with the first of men.

And I dream that these garden closes,
With their shade and their sun-flecked sod,
And their lilies and bowers of roses,
Were laid by the hand of God.

The kiss of the sun for pardon,
The song of the birds for mirth—
One is nearer God's heart in a garden
Than anywhere else on earth.

—D. F. GURNEY.

HAVE you ever seen God in your garden? He is there all day and every day. Only trained eyes, however, can see Him. Very few people can see what is right in front of them. Is it not strange that people have to be trained to see the things that stare them in the face? Yet so it is. God is very clearly to be seen in our gardens; but how many of us see Him? When you do see Him there, then your garden becomes Heaven. Mr T. E. Browne has said in words that some of you may understand :—

> "A garden is a lovesome thing, God wot!
> Rose plot,
> Fringed pool,
> Fern'd grot—
> The veriest school
> Of peace; and yet the fool
> Contends that God is not—
> Not God, in gardens, when the eve is cool?
> Nay, but I have a sign;
> 'Tis very sure God walks in mine."

It is because I get such joy from seeing God in my garden, that I want to help you to see Him in yours. So I am going to tell you where and how I see Him.

A PACKET OF SEEDS IN A DRAWER

I

New Year

I HAVE found in a drawer, dry and dusty, a packet of seeds.

How long they have been there, I do not know; at least a year, perhaps more.

They are all withered and useless, and as I look at them and handle them, I begin to feel a little sad, I cannot but think of what they might have been.

Here is a Vegetable Marrow Seed. What a possibility was stored up in this little oval thing! It might have become a trailing, many-leaved, many-fruited, beautiful vine. It might have multiplied itself many thousands of times, and fed several people.

Here is a Spinach Seed. That too might have made a beautiful green plant and a very healthy vegetable.

Both the Marrow and the Spinach were promises of usefulness.

Here is a Nasturtium Seed. It is of the climbing kind and bears dark red flowers lined with gold. What a promise of beauty that was!

And here is a Wallflower Seed. What a promise of fragrance that was! Yes, this packet of seeds all dried up, withered and dead, makes me feel a little sad. So much promise of usefulness, beauty, and fragrance, all lost. Every promise unfulfilled, because somebody put them away in this drawer and they have been forgotten.

There are many boys and girls like this packet of seeds.

As I look at you this New Year Sunday morning, I cannot help thinking of last New Year Sunday morning : and as I think, I feel a little sad. We made such a lot of promises then, didn't we? We promised we would be much more useful than we had been. We promised we would show more of the Beauty of Holiness. We said we would be purer in thought, word and deed. That we would talk to God and read His Word more. We promised to be so good this year. We promised that our lives should be fragrant with love. We meant to be kinder, more thoughtful, more sympathetic, more charitable. We promised to

make home brighter with loving words and deeds. But what happened?

With most of us, our promises were, like the packet of seeds, put in a drawer and forgotten, and now, when we take them out and look at them they make us sad. So much usefulness, beauty and fragrance lost.

This New Year Sunday, let us determine not to promise anything that we will not perform. Determine to be useful, beautiful and fragrant, but let us also ask God to give us strength to keep our determination, and in His strength we will not fail of anything that we have promised.

A PACKET OF SEEDS IN A DRAWER

II

THIS morning, we are going to think again of that packet of seeds which I found, dry and dusty, in a drawer.

You remember that they were all withered and dead, because they had been put away and forgotten; and they made us feel a little sad for they reminded us of our unfulfilled promises.

What should have been done with these seeds? How could their promises of usefulness, beauty, and fragrance have been carried into effect? How may the promises we made last Sunday be fulfilled this year?

They must be planted in the soil.

Seeds grow in the fresh brown earth. Promises grow in the soil of our daily life. Plant them there. Realise that all the things you want to be and do, you must be and do at home, at school, at play. That is the soil in which to plant promises: the soil of your life-garden.

A Packet of Seeds in a Drawer

They must be planted at the right time.

You cannot sow all sorts of seeds on the same day. Marrows are planted in April: Nasturtiums in May; Wallflowers in August.

You cannot fulfil every promise at once. There is a time for everything. Find out the right time, take the right opportunity, then plant your seed.

They must be planted in the right place and way.

You cannot sow seeds anyhow and anywhere. Marrows are first sown in pots; then, when they have grown into strong hardy plants, about the end of May they are planted out in rich soil—such as a heap of decaying leaves. Nasturtiums are put straight into the ground where they are required to remain and grow. Wallflowers are first sown in a warm corner of fine earth, all the seeds close together. Then when October or November comes, they are pricked out, as we say, and planted in the places where they are to remain.

Promises need the same care. You cannot plant a promise of usefulness anyhow and anywhere. First you must find the right place, and then the right way, in which to be useful.

They must be fed.

Seeds need feeding and they need the right food. So do promises. The food for promises is Prayer. If you want your promises to grow, Pray and read your Bible carefully every day. This is the very best food. There are many kinds of food, but none like this.

They must be watered.

Seeds soon wither and die without moisture. Nothing kills a promise so easily as dryness. The water for promises is Prayer. Prayer acts on promises just as rain acts on seeds—it keeps them nourished and living. Pray every morning and evening and very often during the day, and you will not forget your promises.

They must have sunshine.

You must live your life in the sunshine of the companionship of Jesus. Then the promise-seeds will be warmed and will develop, and all the life-garden will be a happy place of usefulness, beauty, and fragrance.

NOURISHING STONES

I HAVE heard gardeners say that they would not have a garden that did not grow stones. Perhaps you think that sounds very strange, but it is not as strange as it sounds.

In the garden one is always coming across stones—stones of all kinds, shapes, and sizes. I expect you know what gardeners do with them. They pick them up, carry them away and make paths, good solid paths, with them. No gardener who wants his garden to look very nice and well kept, will leave the stones about on the surface of the ground.

Although stones are thus treated they are not a curse to the garden.

If you lift up a stone lying on the ground you will always find beneath it a certain amount of moisture. The stone, being cold, gathers the moisture, and by keeping the moisture under it, nourishes the ground, so that a garden that did not grow stones would be too dry to be useful.

What stones are to the garden, difficulties are to the life.

In every life there are difficulties of all kinds,

shapes, and sizes. We must treat these difficulties as good gardeners treat stones; pick them up, carry them away, make paths with them.

We do not like difficulties. We talk of them as though they were altogether a curse. Wise men, however, like to see a certain number of difficulties, for they know that a life which does not grow difficulties will grow nothing.

As under every stone you find moisture, so under every difficulty you find blessing.

The blessing of patience.

If you take up a difficulty and lift it out of the way, you will find under it the blessing of patience. You may not realise this at first. As you remove little difficulty after little difficulty you will not know that all the time you are finding that quality of spirit and temper which can endure and suffer with quietness and calmness. When, however, you come to a big difficulty, you will realise what you have gained. You will know that under the stones you have found the blessing of patience.

The blessing of strength.

Another blessing you will find under the difficulties of life is that of strength. You know

what you are doing when you are in the gymnasium using the dumb-bells. The bells are not heavy, yet by the constant lifting of them you develop a strong chest and arms and body. So by the constant removing of difficulties you exercise mind and spirit and gain strength; a strength which is of God.

The blessing of courage.

How brave those hearts become that never run away from a difficulty! The more you run away from what is hard and trying, the more you want to run away; the bigger coward you become. The boy or girl who always runs away in fright from every little startling thing that happens, is really helping himself or herself to lose control over the nerves and body; whereas that one who will, even though startled, NOT run away, but find out what it is that has startled, is developing a fine and bold self-control. The boy who says "I can't" as soon as a difficult task comes to him, is helping himself to be a coward; but he who says "I can" to every work, deliberately lifting the difficulty out of the way, is discovering the blessing of courage: he is finding that nourishment for his soul which God has placed beneath the stone.

The blessing of sympathy.

There is still another blessing which God has hidden under difficulties. It is the blessing of sympathy.

By lifting out of the way your own difficulties you find that quality of mind and spirit which is able to share the feelings of another who is also trying to lift difficulties. You find the way by which another can be helped and comforted—and to help and comfort another is the highest and noblest work you or I can do.

So you may find many blessings hidden away by the wise hand of God under difficulties. Without these nourishing stones life would be an unblest thing. But remember, difficulties not lifted out of the way reveal no blessings.

There is one thing we may never do with stones.

We may never throw them about.

There is one thing we may never do with difficulties. We may never throw them about. It is not following Jesus to make life harder for others by putting difficulties in their way. Whenever we see a difficulty, either in our own or in another's life, it is our duty to lift it out of the way. This is what Jesus did. He went about always lifting the difficulties out of the

way. He lifted the one difficulty which no one else could lift. He took our sin, lifted it out of the way and bore it on the Cross. If you will love and trust and follow Jesus, you will find even the great sin-difficulty lifted out of your way.

These stones, lifted out of the way, make a path—a path strong and sure—that leads at last to the Great White Throne where Jesus sits as King. All who reach that Throne by that path, hear Jesus say: "Well done, good and faithful servant."

WEEDS

WEEDS are the terrible spoilers and thieves of the garden. They are the evil spirits that ever watch for an opportunity to enter in and ruin the good and the beautiful. How much labour and effort and thought and time would be saved if there were no weeds! Every garden would then be a little garden of Eden, even as it was before the enemy entered and scattered the evil seeds about. But the enemy that entered Eden was Satan and he made Adam and Eve to sin! Yes, and the beautiful garden was lost to man when the sin-weeds entered.

Because of this, wherever you find a tribe of men on the earth, you also find hung over the tribe some writing which everybody can read and which is a warning against the sin-weeds.

It is not possible for us now to go over the whole earth and read all the signs of warning, but we can travel over part of Europe and read some of those signs that hang over some of the European nations. Let us start with SPAIN.

The warning hung before the eyes of the men, women and children of Spain reads thus :—

> "In the garden more grows
> Than the gardener sows."

That means that there are some things in God's Garden that He does not want. There are some plants growing that He has not planted. These we know are the sin-weeds, the things that grow in the heart-garden that God never meant to be there.

Forming part of the Spanish Peninsula is a little country called PORTUGAL.

Over the Portuguese people this is hung :—

> "Ill weeds are not hurt by frost."

Evidently a Portuguese had observed that while frost easily kills the beautiful flowers, it does not seem to hurt the weeds. So he taught the people that the good things in our hearts are much more easily lost than the bad things.

Over FRANCE this sign is written :—

> "Ill weeds grow apace."

One has only to be away from home for a short holiday, leaving meanwhile the garden untended, to find, on returning, an amazing amount of weed life flourishing. One needs only to leave one's heart unwatched and un-

guarded for an hour, to find how true it is that sin-weeds grow apace.

So quickly do the sin-weeds grow that the smallest seeds of them are too dangerous to be allowed to come near the heart.

Over DENMARK there hangs a sign not altogether unlike the French :—

"Ill weeds grow fastest and last longest."

The Danish people agree with the French as to the fast growth of sin-weeds, they add also that they last longest : take longest to kill.

Over ENGLAND there hangs a sign almost exactly like the Danish :—

"One year's seed
Seven years' weed,"

which is only another way of saying that when once you have allowed sin to develop in the heart, it is very, very difficult to get rid of it. So difficult is it that there is only one hand that can take the sin out of the heart—the Wounded Hand of Jesus.

If you want your heart-garden cleared of its sin-weeds, bring it to Jesus ; tell Him what you want : let Him do with you what He will.

BEAUTIFUL WEEDS

I

IN my last talk with you I spoke of sin-weeds in the heart-garden. I want now to say something else about those sin-weeds. Some of them are very ugly, but some of them are very beautiful. It is of the very beautiful sin-weeds that we need to be especially warned, for, as the Bible tells us, even Satan himself sometimes appears as an Angel of Light.

In my garden I have at least three very beautiful weeds: the Daisy, the Dandelion, and the Buttercup.

These beautiful weeds never seem as bad as the ugly ones.

The little Daisy never seems a weed in the same sense as the nasty Plantain or Spear-grass. The lovely golden-headed Dandelion; the finely polished, ever-shining Buttercup; these surely are not weeds! Are they not too beautiful for weeds? No, they are only beautiful weeds. If you saw my lawn you

would not feel like calling them even "beautiful" weeds.

So there are some beautiful sins; sins that are very attractive and fascinating. They never seem quite as sinful as the horrible, ugly, repulsive sins. Yet they are. Indeed, they are not only as bad but much worse, for they are so much more dangerous; they have so much more temptation in them. Most of us have no need to fear the ugly sins, since, because of their very ugliness, they fail to attract and tempt. How much, however, we need to beware of what is only a false Angel of Light!

These beautiful weeds are harder to get rid of because they are so beautiful.

It always hurts me a little to dig up the Daisies from my lawn, and I thoroughly sympathised with a dear little woman who came to see me one day and who, finding me on the lawn digging up the Daisies, said :—" Oh, you cruel, wicked man to kill the dear, little Daisies."

So it is with these beautiful sins. It always hurts more to dig them out of the heart: they are so nice and attractive that we do not like to let them go.

Beautiful Weeds

Nevertheless, wise gardeners dig up beautiful weeds.

However beautiful they may be, they spread rapidly and they completely spoil the lawn, killing the grass. A wise gardener knows that if he wants a fine lawn, every weed—beautiful or ugly—must be destroyed.

Perhaps this explains to you why Father or Mother sometimes says "no" to you; forbidding you to do what seems to you to be perfectly right. You grumble and growl and make quite a big fuss over it, but Mother is a wise gardener and knows better than you what are weeds and what are flowers.

And this is why God will not let us do some things which with our imperfect vision we may think harmless. He is a wise Master-gardener and always knows best.

These Forbiddings are not cruel; they are wise; they are kind; they are the expression of perfect love.

Beware of the beautiful weeds.

BEAUTIFUL WEEDS

II

THE Daisy, the Dandelion, the Buttercup, are weeds. But are they not really flowers? Are not many beautiful weeds, when cultivated, among our most beautiful flowers?

These beautiful weeds of which I have been speaking are not weeds except when they are in the wrong place.

Beautiful weeds are really flowers in the wrong place.

This is how I learnt this lesson. I had on my lawn a bare patch where grass seemed very unwilling to grow. I put seed on it, but the seed did not sprout. I was thinking what to do next when I noticed that on the path (which, of course, I wanted free from all weed) there were many roots of grass growing. Then I said: "I will carefully take up the grass from the path where it is not wanted and where it is a weed, and place it in the bare patch where it will cease to be a weed." This I did, with the

result that the bare patch vanished, and what had been only weeds now became part of a beautiful lawn.

So it is with the Daisy and other beautiful weeds. They are, when in the right place and properly cultivated, beautiful flowers; but when on the lawn, when in the wrong place and uncultivated, harmful weeds.

Beautiful sins, likewise, are really good powers used in the wrong way.

Take temper as an illustration. Would you say temper was a good or an evil? I asked a lot of boys and girls that question once and they all said: "A sin. An evil." They were all wrong. Temper is a good power and may be of very great value for God and man, if used properly and in the right place.

Faraday, the great chemist, when a young man, awoke to the fact that he had a very strong temper which, unless kept in check, would ruin him. So whenever he found himself getting into this state of heated temper, he went into his workshop and worked it out. He saw that his temper was good energy, of great value to him; and indeed, this great fund of energy within, often carried him through many a difficult and trying experiment.

I have heard of a man who had a large business and who liked to engage bad-tempered men as his servants, "for," said he, "I get the most out of them." He would put them into a room by themselves and make them work alone and so work off all the overflowing energy.

Irreverence is another illustration.

It is fun in the wrong place. No one objects to good fun on the playground, it is healthy. It is a gift of God. But fun in God's House is evil. It is irreverence. It harms you more than you can realise.

Deceitfulness is cleverness in the wrong place.

Nobody objects to cleverness. It, again, is a gift of God. But deceitfulness works untold evil. If deceitful people took as much trouble to be clever in a good way as they do in a bad way they would be very useful to God and man.

These powers which God has given us are flowers in the heart-garden, but they are weeds when they are used wrongly.

BEAUTIFUL WEEDS

III

HOW can we make beautiful weeds into beautiful flowers?

It is possible to do this. The Daisy has been made into the Chrysanthemum; the Buttercup into the beautiful Globe-flower [Trollius]; and there are such fine possibilities in the Dandelion that it is now spoken of as "The Florist's Opportunity."

Take the beautiful weeds out of the wrong place.

They must all be dug out of the lawn and must be removed very carefully or some part of the root may be left in, which may grow again, and then the work would be wasted. Never try to get rid of your sin-weeds carelessly. For the sake of a little trouble weeks of labour may be lost.

Although you may be able to do a lot towards digging out the sin-weeds, as I have told you before, there is only one Person who can be sure of getting them right out, root and all. Jesus alone is able to get deep enough to take out all the troublesome root fibres that run

through and through the heart, sucking out of it the best life and power.

Put them into the right place.

So many "dig out" who never "put in." They try to take out bad temper without putting it into work, and that is impossible. Put temper into work; deceit into thought of how to work best; irreverence into good healthy play.

But as Jesus alone can properly dig these things out, so Jesus alone can properly plant them in their right places. We must ask Jesus to do both.

Cultivate them.

When Jesus has replanted them, we must cultivate them carefully. We must feed them with the Word of God and water them with Prayer. Prayer is conversation with Jesus, and the place where we let Jesus talk to us and where we talk to Jesus, is the place where these rightly planted flowers come to their most beautiful and strong blossoming. That is the place of Communion. It is the place where we and Jesus learn to become very dear friends.

It is only thus, in an intimate friendship with Jesus, that our powers can be used in the very best place and the very best way.

MY NEIGHBOUR'S WEEDS

I

WHAT do you think is the most interesting thing in the world? Electricity? Engines? Ships?

I will tell you what many boys and girls sometimes find to be the most interesting thing:—My Neighbour's Weeds.

Have you ever seen anybody leaning over the wall counting the weeds in his neighbour's garden? You say: "Of course not, nobody would be such a silly as to try to do that!" Wait a minute and think a little more.

There were some boys talking together about another boy who was absent and evidently much disliked, for they said: "Isn't he a proud chap? He can hardly keep his feet on the ground, he sticks up his nose so high! And isn't he vulgar and common? Do you notice the way he talks and how untidy he always is? And selfish! why he had a tuck box sent him the other day and he didn't give me any! And ignorant! he can't even

spell properly, and as for sums he's a perfect idiot at them. Yes, and isn't he a lazy dolt? He never works. He's a mean, disagreeable chap and he's always talking about other fellows and showing up their bad points." And so they went on, until this poor, absent, much disliked boy must have seemed very bad indeed. Do you see what those boys were doing? They were leaning over the wall counting their neighbour's weeds. And how they seemed to enjoy it! And what is more, they did not seem to think that they were doing anything very silly or wrong, although as you have just said, they were very silly indeed.

What are we to do about our neighbour's weeds?

Mind your own business.

Whatever you may see, don't talk about it. Talking only makes bad worse. And talking is very probably a sin-weed in your own heart-garden. Further, things are not always what they seem, and you never really know whether what you see in your neighbour is a weed or not. You know how often others put down to your account things of which you have never even thought. Remember, when you

talk about what you think is your neighbour's weed, that you may be putting down to him something altogether wrong; something about which he has never even thought. If you do not want others to put down wrong things to your account be careful not to put them down to another's. Mind your own business.

Look out for your own weeds.

Whenever you think you see a weed in your neighbour's garden, look into your own carefully to see if you have one also anything like it.

It is very surprising how much we are like each other in both our good points and our bad points, and it is more than probable that what you think you see in another you will find in yourself. People in glass houses must not throw stones. Act on that wise advice. You may be in a glass house and by talking of another you may be breaking your own glass, which is both dangerous and expensive work.

Remember that love covers a multitude of sins.

It is the evil spirit of hatred that shows up the sin-weeds in the heart-garden of another.

You never know what really causes what you think you see. It is the love angel that covers up all with careful hand. The love angel covers up all sins by not giving occasion to sin: by making every possible allowance; by keeping silence; by tenderly rebuking—VERY tenderly and thoughtfully; and by forgiving everything.

"GOD forgives ALL OUR iniquity."

MY NEIGHBOUR'S WEEDS

II

I HAVE said that the first thing to learn in connection with "my neighbour's weeds" is to mind my own business. That is true if I only want to talk about them and add others to them.

There is a sense, however, in which "my neighbour's weeds" are my business. If I am trying to follow Jesus it is my business to help my neighbour to be the very best he can.

And, also, this is true :—that if my neighbour's garden is full of weeds it makes it all the harder for me to keep my own garden clear of them. It is certain that the sins of others make it harder for us to be good. In this case, what am I to do with my neighbour's weeds?

Learn that you cannot pull out his weeds for him.

This is a very important thing for us to get well into our hearts and heads. Whatever is done, my neighbour must do it for himself.

Suppose I lived next door to a man who kept a very weedy garden, and suppose I took my hoe and marched into his garden and began tearing up his weeds, what do you think would happen? There would probably be some trouble and he might never again speak to me. I should have put myself in the wrong by my action.

There are some people who try in as crude and rough a way, to take the sin-weeds out of their neighbour's heart-garden and an immense amount of unnecessary trouble is created and even what might have been good influence is hopelessly lost.

Make friends with your neighbour and show him how beautiful a garden is without weeds.

Rather than rush in with my hoe to my neighbour's garden, it were wise to invite him into mine, making friends with him, showing him how very happy a place a garden is that is free from weeds. I shall then be sure to make my own garden as free from them as possible, in order to help my neighbour. That is the way God works. In order to save sinful man He came in the form of the sinless Jesus and by making friends of men, showed

them how beautiful a thing is a life and heart without sin.

If you want to rid your neighbour's heart-garden of its weeds, make your own as full of the flowers of God as possible: have it well kept, carefully trimmed, and thoroughly weeded.

Then your neighbour will begin to want a beautiful and weedless garden.

He will begin to realise that there are weeds in his garden—a thing that before he most probably had not realised—and he will then begin to take his own hoe and with his own hands and labour try to tear up the weeds.

When you see this, then your duty is wisely and carefully to lead him to Jesus.

Tell him of Jesus, the mighty to save, for Jesus only, the Divine Man, with His pierced Hands and Head Crowned with Thorns—Jesus only, can clear our heart-gardens of all sin-weeds.

HIDDEN WEEDS REVEALED

WE have had a long, long time without rain. Everything is parched. Everything has to be watered by hand. The grass has become brown, for the sun has bleached away its beautiful green. All the earth has dried into dust. Even the weeds in the flower beds are having a bad time of it, for I have only to use my dutch hoe—which is easy work this dry weather—and the weeds lie open on the dry earth to the sun which soon dries them up and kills them.

I have discovered one thing, however, of which I am glad.

The sun, by drying up the lawn, has revealed some green weeds which I did not know were there. Now they show plainly against the brown grass and can be easily taken out and poisoned. I suppose that they keep thus green because their roots go down so deep; hence I must first cut off the tops and then put some poison on the broken root. When everything went well with the grass, when the rain fell and it was well nourished, the weeds were hidden:

when things went very badly with the grass, when it lacked moisture and nourishment and lost its green, then the hidden weeds were revealed.

Herein is a parable that has taught me valuable lessons, and as it may help you to learn these same lessons, I will tell you what I have learnt. I have learnt—

That I can never know what sins are in my heart until those things occur that alone will reveal them.

Don't you think that we are sometimes apt to believe that the only sin-weeds in our heart-gardens are those of which we are conscious? But there are others of which we do not know, and we need to pray David's Prayer :—Cleanse Thou me from secret—unconscious, is the right word—sins.

I have learnt—

That whenever another person does wrong, I must never say : "I could not do such a thing."

An old proverb says : "Opportunity makes the thief," and since only the necessary circumstances are needed to reveal the hidden sin-

weeds, I never know what I may or may not do.

I have learnt—

That if anyone be overtaken in a fault, I must restore such an one in the spirit of meekness: considering myself, lest I also be tempted.

Because of what *may* be revealed as growing in *our* heart-gardens we must be very gentle to those in whose gardens we find weeds.

HAND AND KNEE WORK

I HAVE been thinking a great deal about my lawn this week. I don't quite know what to do with it. Evidently, when it was laid down, the turfs were not first cleared of weeds. I thought of many schemes, but was satisfied with none. I asked the advice of every gardener I knew, and one recommended one thing, another some other thing, but still I felt disinclined to follow the advice of any one of them. At last I met a gardener who had had more experience than any of the others and he said :—"I have tried in my time nearly everything that has been advertised or suggested for producing perfect lawns, but the only thing I have found really satisfactory is constant hand and knee work." Instantly I knew that I had met God again in my garden, for I heard a voice in my heart repeating the advice and saying : "There are many plans for producing perfect lives, but the only really satisfactory method is hand and knee work."

Do you understand what that means?

Knee work is prayer.

Prayer is not eloquence, not thoughts beautifully spoken; it is earnestness, reality. It is not the explanation of anything; it is the deep feeling of something, which thing is our own helplessness and weakness, and this feeling of helplessness driving us confidently to trust in our Father, God, who is all helpfulness and strength. Prayer is drinking at the Fountain Head of power.

You have heard of the great William Ewart Gladstone. Mrs Gladstone, speaking to Mr John Morley in 1891, said: "Whoever writes Mr Gladstone's life must remember that he had two sides—one impetuous, impatient, irrestrainable; the other all self-control, able to dismiss all but the great central aim, able to put aside what is weakening and disturbing: that he achieved this self-mastery, and had succeeded in the struggle ever since he was three or four and twenty, first by the natural power of his character, and second by incessant wrestling in prayer — prayer that had been abundantly answered."

Mr Gladstone got power by drinking at the Fountain Head of power.

Hand and Knee Work

Hand work is using the power got by prayer.

It is bending the back to the toil of the weed-fork; it is using the eyes to see where labour is needed and then using the hands to perform the needed labour; it is using the ears to hear the cry of the suffering and then tending to the sufferer with loving and tender service; it is finding out where sacrifice is required and then willingly offering the self upon the altar of sacrifice. It is using the power got by prayer.

Prayer is not asking for power without intending to use it. Such so-called prayer is a mockery and hateful to God. Power is only given to him who, when he has it, will know what to do with it.

There is no real Knee Work without Hand Work, and there can be no real Hand Work without Knee Work.

HOW TO GROW ROSES IN THE KING'S GARDEN

Good Friday

NO flower in the world can compare with the Rose. It is the Royal Blood of the garden. It is the most difficult flower to grow to perfection, and costs the most in labour, thought, and attention.

It proves how true is the old proverb, "Best things are most difficult." When, therefore, we speak of growing Roses in the King's Garden, we are thinking of the best and most difficult product of a life; we are thinking of the most perfect flower that can blossom in a boy's or a girl's heart, for your heart is the King's Garden and the most loving service you can render is the most perfect flower, the Royal Rose, of love.

But the most loving service costs most. It demands the most unselfishness and the deepest consecration. Loving service is something done which takes something out of you. It is the giving of what is of yourself to or for another.

Most loving service—the perfect Rose—is the result of giving what takes most out of yourself.

Jesus grew the most perfect Rose that ever blossomed in the King's Garden when, in love, He gave His life upon the Cross to and for you and me.

That Royal Rose was fed and nourished when the Blood flowed from His pierced Heart and His Head was Crowned with Thorns.

There is a beautiful legend about that Thorn Crown. It says that it was made from a Rose Briar and that when the thorns pierced His brow, the drops of blood that started and fell to the ground at His feet, blossomed—Roses!

> "Men saw the Thorns on Jesus' brow,
> But Angels saw the Roses."

In the loving deeds of sacrifice done to-day by the followers of Jesus, men still see nothing but the Thorns—the painful part of the service; but the Angels of God, who have the true vision, see the Roses.

ALWAYS WORK WITH CLEAN TOOLS

Easter Sunday

I HAVE been building a Tool House this week. I will tell you why I have built it.

A gardener came to see me and also to see how I was getting on with my work in the garden. He saw many things that were not altogether satisfactory and needed improvement. One thing especially he noticed. He saw my garden tools standing by the wall, uncovered and open to wind, sun, rain, and frost; and he said as he pointed to them: "That will never do." "What will never do?" I said. He answered: "Those tools standing there. They are dirty and rusty and show plainly the effect of the rain, and the sun, and the atmosphere. No good gardener will ever use dirty tools. He will never leave his tools about so that they get rusty. He knows that dirty tools mean harder work and most probably unsatisfactory, if not bad work."

I want to be a good gardener, so I have

built my Tool House and am keeping my tools properly and intend always to work with clean tools. As that gardener was talking, it seemed to me as if God clothed Himself with the man for I learnt from his words this truth. Always work in the Garden of Life with clean tools.

Do you understand what that means? It means :—

Never work with a lie.

A lie is a dirty tool and it defiles him that uses it. No good work has ever been done with it, although most people have tried. Some boys and girls think—and it certainly does so appear sometimes—that they can remove a bank of difficulty by digging with a lie. Nevertheless, however it may appear, he who digs with a lie increases the bank he wants to remove. He is really piling difficulty on to the top of what is already difficult. He is not a good gardener, and he is doing bad work.

Never work with cheating.

To use that tool is not worth the trouble. You are not helping yourself at all. You may be getting marks with it but the marks don't belong to you. You may get a place in your class but it is not your place. The tool of

cheating is used by the one who wants to make his garden look nice by stealing from that of another; it is the tool by which the stolen property is carried across. It is a dirty tool. Best gardeners always grow their own stuff.

Never work with an unclean word.

It defiles the lips that use it and it defiles the mind and heart of the one who hears it. It is an altogether unclean tool and spoils everything it touches. It does sometimes provoke a laugh and some who hear it may say you are a very clever sort of fellow, but those who laugh and say so, are those whose laugh is a curse, and whose opinion you are better without. A really decent boy or girl never laughs at an unclean word, and never thinks the better of anyone who can use it.

Never work with tale-telling.

Don't tell tales. Don't try to creep into anyone's favour by the use of that dirty tool. It never yet helped to grow a flower. The only thing it ever helped to grow is a harvest of nettles that have badly stung the boy or girl who used it. It is a cowardly, underhanded, mean tool, and is too dirty for use.

Always Work with Clean Tools

Good gardeners always use clean tools. Honesty, truthfulness, trust, love, gentleness, silence, purity, utter straightforwardness. These and others like them, are the only tools that ever helped to grow flowers in the heart-garden.

MARCH DUST

I EXPECT you have heard people say that a bushel of March Dust is worth its weight in gold. Do you know what that means?

It means that the sharp, stinging dust that the March winds pick up and throw into your face is very valuable. Its value is this:—In March all the leaf buds are beginning to expand and develop. The roots are beginning to feel the Spring and are starting to draw their nourishment from the earth.

God has carefully wrapped up all the little buds so that the frost and snow and bitter cold winds of winter should not destroy them. When the buds begin to develop, they push against the protecting cover and try to break it away. They are not quite strong enough of themselves to do this, so God sends the March Winds and they pick up the sharp, stinging, cutting dust and throw it hard against the protecting covers of the buds. This cuts the covers so that the leaves are able to push their way out.

March Dust

The sharp, disagreeable March Dust is something which, though the trees may not like it as it is flung, sharp and cutting, against them, is nevertheless cause and reason for thankfulness.

March dust is flung by the winds of
God in every heart-garden.

We do not like it. We do not like the disagreeable, unpleasing, sharp-cutting, little experiences of life. Boys and girls often complain because of the many things they wish otherwise and yet, if you could only see it, this same disagreeable March Dust, which often stings the face and brings tears to the eyes, is one of God's greatest love-gifts to us, and one day we shall have learnt to thank Him for it.

God carefully wraps up all our fine leaf-buds of power so that they may not be harmed when we are very young, but as we grow older, they begin to expand and push out against the coverings and then the March Dust of difficult and disagreeable things is thrown against them and they find opportunities to increase and grow.

By means of the very things we do not like—the March Dust—God helps to make our heart-gardens beautiful.

UNDER-GARDENERS

I

ALL the world—trees, flowers, men, and women—is God's great garden. Jesus is the Head-Gardener. But in everything, in every department, God wants Under-gardeners.

The book of Genesis tells us that the first man was God's Under-gardener. Nature has to be looked after. By itself, it all runs to seed. It is only as man tills and plants and cultivates, that the world of nature is kept from being a wilderness.

This is true also of the world of men and women. Without the work of the Under-gardeners on their own lives and the lives of others, it all runs to weed and seed. It is only as man comes to the help of God and does his own God-appointed work, that the world of men and women is kept from the terrible calamities of sin and iniquity.

Since this is so, each one of us is driven to face the question :—What is my work as God's Under-gardener and how can I do it ?

What does God want to produce in His garden? Everything that is lovely, true, pure, and holy. It always seems to me very wonderful that we can be God's Under-gardeners in such a great work; that we, so imperfect, can help God to grow the perfect. This, however, is the message Jesus gave us from the great Father, and while we cannot understand it, we can trustfully accept it, find out what God wants us to do, and do it.

Ask the master of the garden to take you into his garden as an under-gardener.

If you wanted to begin work in any man's garden you would first ask him if he were willing to let you work there. The same order must be followed in God's garden. You must come to Jesus in prayer asking Him to employ you in His service. Jesus will at once lay down certain conditions of employment, asking you if you agree to them. If you can say "yes," He will take you into His service.

What are these conditions?

1. Are you willing to work for Me?

"But surely," you say, "if I ask to be employed that means that I am willing to work, doesn't it?" By no means! Plenty of men have asked me to employ them in my garden

who were never really willing to work there. What they were willing to do was to waste their time there and get paid well for doing that!

When you think you want to work in God's garden it is always necessary to examine carefully what is behind the thought. That is why Jesus asks as His first condition:—Are you really willing to work for Me or is it only that you like the idea of it? Is your will set in the right direction and fixed with a *real* purpose?

2. Are you willing to work entirely and only for Me?

That is what Jesus meant when He said: "Ye cannot serve two masters." But why should anyone want to serve two masters? Is not one enough? You would think so, but experience soon reveals that most of us want to serve Jesus and ourselves at the same time, and those who want to do that are not fit to be God's Under-gardeners.

3. Are you willing to live in My garden? Because My flowers can be grown only by those who live all the time, day and night, in My garden.

By that Jesus means that He wants us to have always only one thought and desire and motive, which is, to cultivate His flowers, to spend our whole selves and our whole lives

in trying to produce everywhere those things that are lovely, true, pure, and holy.

If to these conditions you are ready to agree, Jesus will at once employ you in His service.

Service in God's garden, however, means more than merely being willing.

Use your head.

It means head work as well as will work. How often gardeners who have employed men and boys under them have complained to me that their under-gardeners never use their heads! I went into a garden a little while ago and as I went round looking at and admiring the flowers, I missed one kind and I asked where it was, for I wanted some small plants of it for my own garden, and the gentleman to whom the garden belonged took me to an almost bare patch of earth and said: "This is where those flowers ought to be, but the stupid boy was told to weed the bed and of course went at it without any thought, and took all the growing plants for weeds and pulled them up. The few you can see are all that are left after his efforts."

That is how many of us work in God's garden. We do not work with our heads and

the result is, as one great writer has said: "Wise men spend their time putting right the mistakes of good men."

We are sure to pull up flowers in mistake for weeds unless we are *thinking* Under-gardeners.

Use your heart.

Head-work, however, depends very largely on heart-work.

That is why Dean Hole begins his famous book on Roses by saying: "He who would grow Roses must first have them in his heart." Love thinks. It is only when you really and deeply love that you surround the loved one with thoughtfulness. It is only when you really love Jesus that you think for Jesus. It is only when you have learnt to love the true, the lovely, the pure, and the holy, for Jesus' sake, that you can see them clearly, and thoughtfully cultivate them.

To be God's Under-gardeners, WILL, HEAD, and HEART must all be used.

UNDER-GARDENERS

II

It is required of an under-gardener that he be obedient.

THIS is written clearly over the gate of entrance to the Master's Garden so that all who enter may enter clearly understanding what is required of them.

This superscription means more than is realised at first sight, therefore an Angel is always placed at the gate to explain it to all who enter. This is what the Angel says:—

Obedience means humility—willingness to do lowly service.

When you first enter God's garden, on what kind of work will you be started? Emptying flower pots, tying up flowers, pulling up weeds from the paths. Not exactly very important work, is it? Not very great work, not work that everybody will notice and admire, but work that has to be done and can best be done by

unskilled and untrained hands. It is the kind of work that is very uninteresting and makes you very tired. No one is fit to work in God's garden who does not understand that he will be started on very lowly service.

Obedience means doing that which you are told to do and only that.

We understand that obedience means doing as we are told, but what we do not grasp is that it also means doing nothing except under direct guidance from Jesus. A gardener sends his boy to tie up some flowers that have grown so tall that they may be broken by the wind or lie on the earth and spoil. On the way to the flower-bed the boy passes a Grape House. He is curious and puts his head in through the door-way to see what it is like. At once he says: "How hot it is!" Then in his ignorance he says: "I think they will be all the better for a little air." So in he goes and opens the windows. Then on he goes to tie up the flowers. By the time the gardener discovers what has been done the grapes are probably harmed, if not spoilt; all because the boy has not learned that obedience means doing only as we are told.

For lack of this understanding, very many

flowers and very much fruit is lost in the Master's Garden.

We cannot there do anything as we like, we may only work strictly under exact orders from Jesus.

Obedience means putting into every work your best effort.

Under-gardeners who are told to empty flower-pots and who leave half the earth in the bottom of the pots because it has got hard and is a little difficult to get out, are not wanted in the Master's Garden. God's Under-gardeners must be those who see the detail in every duty and realise the duty in every detail. They must never scamp, or hurry carelessly through, their work. They must, as St Paul says, study to show themselves approved of God; workmen that do not need to be ashamed.

God wants no drones in His hive. If you want the easiest life choose that life in which there is always something to be done. When I was building my Tool House, a little friend of mine, ten years old, came to see what I was doing and to watch. Soon, I think, he must have got tired of watching, for he said to me: "What do you think is the hardest work?" "I

don't know," I replied. "I will tell you," he said. "Doing no work at all is the hardest work."

Idleness injures the body and destroys the character. Constant work alone keeps us fit for work. Idleness injures others as well as ourselves; for if I do no work, someone will have to do the work I leave undone, and that means that someone will have to do my work as well as his own. This is more than God made us properly able to do without harmful strain. Idleness is a sin against God. It is disobedience, for God has always something for everyone to do. "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake."

UNDER-GARDENERS

III

THERE are two other things concerning Under-gardeners that need to be remembered.

Don't try to teach the head-gardener.

We must be willing to learn and willing to be taught. We must be willing to be shown how to do the work in the best way ; and God's way is best. I have known more than one boy who has gone into a garden to learn gardening who thought he could teach the head-gardener something.

How can we learn from Jesus His way of working?

There are three ways of learning.

First by study.

The best gardeners are those who have studied gardening, who know all about the trees and flowers that grow. They are the men who have read nature-books, studied botany, and have *learnt* flowers.

The best Under-gardeners God has, are

those who have studied most God's Book of Gardening—the Bible.

Second by conversation.

You can learn from conversation what you can never gather from books. You can learn by talking with Jesus what you can never learn by studying His Book. Conversation with Jesus is what we call Prayer or Communion.

Third by experience.

That is, by putting into practice, into actual gardening, those things learnt by study and conversation. Just as you learn from conversation what you can never learn from study, so you learn from experience what neither conversation nor study can ever reveal.

Learn God's method of working in these three ways and you will become wise enough *not* to try to teach the Head-gardener.

An under-gardener must never steal his master's property.

What is his Master's property? All the praise, the honour, the glory. This property is often handed to the Under-gardeners, and they are thus gladdened and encouraged; but true Under-gardeners always hand it on to Him who alone is worthy; to the Lord Jesus, the Head of the Garden.

BUILD YOUR NEST OF FLOWERS

I READ this letter in a paper called "The Garden," some time ago.

DEAR SIR,—I noticed, strewed under a Laburnum tree growing alongside a wall of the house here, a great quantity of sprays of the Laburnum just coming into full flower. As I suspected sparrows were the culprits, I told my gardener to take all the sparrow nests he could find, especially in an old ivy-covered wall near this Laburnum tree. He came to me a short time after and produced a sparrow's nest made almost entirely of sprays of Laburnum flower. It had evidently been the work of only one or two days as the flowers were not perished. That sparrows are most destructive to flowers and fruit-buds I well knew, but it was news to me that they should make their nests of the flowers.—Yours, etc., C. D.

CHESHIRE.

I also knew that sparrows were sometimes thought to be very troublesome, but I never

knew before that they were so wise! for the very wisest thing anyone can do is to make a nest of flowers.

A home of flowers will be a very beautiful place, will it not? It will be a home where everybody is happy.

The home is very much what the boys and girls make it. You can make it a nest of flowers. Here are some to build into the nest.

Use Pansies.

Pansies mean thought, and a very important element in a happy home is thoughtfulness. Indeed, without it, the nest is torn to pieces by the thoughtless inmates.

Use Rosemary.

That is for remembrance. Remembrance of one another's little weaknesses so as to avoid giving any occasion for sin. Remembrance of each other's likes and dislikes so as to gladden with bearing and forbearing. Remembrance of birthdays, special wants, times when special help is needed, that one pair of hands cannot and must not do everything. Remembrance makes the walls of the nest very strong.

Build your Nest of Flowers

Use the Red Rose.

That means love. Pure, strong, holy love that brings the Presence of God into the home. Red Roses always live with Pansies and Rosemary. Pansies and Rosemary soon die without the Red Rose.

Use the White Rose.

That is love expressed as silence. A nest into which no White Roses are built is a very trying home in which to live. Silence when hasty words are spoken ; when unkind things are done ; when some head is aching ; when someone wants to be quiet to read or think. There is never a restful nest when the White Rose is left out of its building.

Use the Blue Violet.

That is love expressed as fidelity. Every member of the home should be faithful to all in the home. Never betray your brother or sister to anyone outside the home. Stand by one another faithful to the end.

Use the White Julienne.

That is love which cheers in adversity. The home should always be the one place in the

world wherein, if any member of it is troubled, unfortunate, failing, despondent or overcome, that one may be sure to find the love that cheers and encourages. Never build your nest without finding some White Julienne for its walls.

Use the Almond Blossom.

That is love which hopes and hopes ever. Do you know the Legend of the Almond Blossom?

Demophoon was sailing from Italy on a voyage, when his ship was wrecked on the Island of Thrace. The King and Queen of Thrace were very kind to him and looked after his shipwrecked crew. They had a beautiful daughter with whom Demophoon fell in love, and who returned his love. Before the wedding day, Demophoon had cause to visit Italy, whither he sailed promising to return very soon. But as the days went by Demophoon did not return. The days grew to months, the months to years, but Demophoon never returned. His beloved was always on the watch for him however. She always hoped he would return and always believed in him, and loved him and never loved another. She grew to be an old woman, but she still hoped on, and she desired

nothing more than to be led down to the sea-shore where she would, contented, sit for hours looking out over the waters, watching for the ship that should bring her loved one—the ship that never came.

At last she died, and the Gods as a reward for her faithful love, turned her into the Almond Blossom, that all might behold how beautiful a thing is the love that hopes and hopes ever.

THE LIPS THAT GROW THE FLOWERS OF SPEECH

"DO you know the secret of the lips that grow the beautiful flowers of speech?" said a wise old man to me. And I answered him: "No, but I do so want to know! I am always really wanting the power to say only what is kind, tender, and thoughtful, encouraging and comforting, although I so often say things that are just the opposite of all these. Right down deep in my heart I know what I want to say, but it seems as though an evil spirit gets hold of my tongue and makes me say the things that I do not want to say, and, when they are said, no one is more sorry and sad than I. I want the power always to say beautiful things: can you, will you, tell me the secret?"

Then the old man, with very beautiful eyes and glowing face, said:

"There was once a Knight who was a very, very good man, but he was very unlearned. He had not the power to remember. All he could ever remember of the prayer to the Holy

Mother was the first two words, AVE MARIA. It was in these two words that he continually addressed his prayer to Heaven.

"Night and day his prayer continued, until, as a very old man, he could only lisp his two words, AVE MARIA. At last he died, and so good an old man was he, that the monks said he must be buried in the chapel yard of the monastery.

"Soon on his grave an Iris was seen growing, and the monks watched it with great interest. When it blossomed, on every beautiful bloom were seen, written in letters of gold, the two words of his prayer, AVE MARIA. So strange a sight was this that the monks were moved to open his grave. They had despised him for his ignorance during his life-time, but now they felt other feelings and thought other thoughts.

"They opened his grave, and they found that the roots of the flower rested on the lips of the Holy Knight.

"The lips that are used in prayer, are the lips that grow the beautiful flowers of speech."

DON'T YOU WISH YOU WERE A BEAN?

Whit Sunday

THERE were two little boys named Tom and Harry. One day they were very anxious to do something to help Mother, so Mother gave them some Broad Beans to shell.

They sat on the floor with their basket of beans and the basin into which the shelled beans were placed. After being at their work a little while the floor got very hard.

Soon Tom, who seemed especially to feel the hardness of the floor, noticed that the beans, as they lay in their shell, rested on a velvety cushion of soft green, and he said to Harry: "Do you see what a lovely soft cushion the beans rest on?" Then after a second or two he added: "Harry, don't you wish you were a bean?"

Still they kept at their work in spite of the hard floor and finished it for Mother.

There comes a time in every work when you "wish you were a bean." It gets weari-

some, difficult, and hard, and you feel like giving it up. Even in service of love there comes a time when it is difficult and you are tired in it and you feel, much as you love, like giving it up. What is the secret of "keeping on" when you feel like "giving up"? The secret lies in the Gift of the Holy Spirit. That is why I have chosen this subject for Whit Sunday. Whit Sunday celebrates the Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was given to the Disciples of Jesus. It is very difficult to explain to you what "The Gift of the Holy Spirit" is, for you are too young to understand, at least with your minds, what it means. But I think you will understand something of it with your hearts when I tell you that it is God in you, giving you power for service, power to "keep on" when you feel like "giving up." Your heart-garden can never come to anything like perfection of beauty without the Gift of the Holy Spirit; but if you ask God for the Gift, He will give it to you and you will then find within you the grace and power to persevere, to keep on and on, until the work of God is done.

THE EGGS DIE IN A COLD NEST

HAPPY are the birds that build in my garden! Their nesting is never disturbed, their nests are never molested.

I was walking out, however, one day and saw a nest in a hedge. I looked into it and saw two eggs. I touched the eggs gently and they were cold. I felt the nest; it, too was cold. Then I knew that the birds had been either killed or frightened away and that the eggs had died in the cold unmothered nest.

What is wanted is a warm nest.

Eggs of song birds are always to me promises of beautiful, musical life. But they are promises that never reach their fulfilment, save in a warm nest. Boys and girls, like eggs, are promises of glad and useful life, but they too can never reach their fulfilment save in a warm nest, save in a home where love keeps every heart warm and all powers living. Do you know who is responsible for keeping the nest warm?

"Mother and Father," you answer at once.

Yes, that is true, but not the whole truth. Mother and Father are very largely responsible. A great painter used to say that his Mother's kiss made him an artist. He meant that his Mother would give him a kiss of loving encouragement whenever he brought to her his first efforts in drawing. He lived in a warm nest.

Keep the nest warm.

There are others, however, in the home that share the responsibility. The boys and girls have a share—a larger share than they think—in keeping the nest warm. Brothers and sisters often chill the nest that Mother and Father try to warm. They do not love each other as they should. They do not encourage each other as they ought or might. Often in spite of all a Mother's loving encouragement, brothers and sisters will laugh at the first rough efforts made to fulfil the life-promise, and sometimes they so chill the nest that the promise dies.

Don't forget your part in the responsibility, and whenever you are tempted to laugh at what another is doing or trying to do, instead of laughing, love and encourage all you can, remembering that eggs die in a cold nest.

DOCTOR GARDEN'S PRESCRIPTION

THE garden is a splendid Doctor. He has given me many prescriptions, but the best he ever gave me was this :—

Take a little sunshine with everything.

This is how Doctor Garden lives: he does nothing without sunshine; so you see he practices what he preaches. He finds that some things to come to their perfection need more sunshine than others, and these he places where they can get it; still everything *has* its sunshine. What do you think Doctor Garden meant when he gave me that advice? He meant, remember that everything that comes to you comes from God, and take it with a thankful heart.

Take a little sunshine with your food.

There was a little girl at breakfast one morning and the sun shone full on to her plate. She took her spoon and did with the sunshine

as she did with her food, putting it into her mouth and saying: "I am eating spoonfuls of sunshine."

You cannot do exactly as that little lady did, yet you can take sunshine with your food. You can always eat it in the full warmth and beauty of God's own sunshine by taking it with a thankful heart. If you do this, no grumble-clouds will cast their shadows on the table making Mother's heart heavy and sad. Grumble-clouds make a rain of tears, but the sunshine of a thankful heart makes the clouds to vanish.

Take a little sunshine with your work.

Do you realise that all your work in school and at home is given by God, although it may come through the Schoolmaster or Father and Mother? So many boys and girls do not realise this and the result is that all their work is to them like one big, black cloud. Your work at school and at home is God's plan for you, and to take it every day and all day from His hand saying "Thank you," is to take sunshine with your work. God gives us work because He knows that work makes the best men and women, and whatever makes the best

of us, is the best *for* us, and is reason for thankfulness.

It is wonderful how, if you take this sunshine with your work, even difficult labour becomes almost easy. Work begun in a thankful spirit is work half done. "Nasty jobs," as boys often call them, are not so nasty, and "tiresome jobs" are not so tiresome, and all work looks brighter, better, and easier in this sunshine.

Take a little sunshine with your play.

But surely all play is itself sunshine! So you may think, until you take your play in a spirit of thankfulness to God who gives it. Then you discover what real play is, for this thankful spirit makes Jesus your Companion in your games, and what a difference there is in games when Jesus shares them! Then the games lose all their selfishness. You do not always want to play your game and no other; you do not lose your temper; you do not mind if you lose, although you like to win.

I was watching some boys playing cricket. They were getting along very well until one boy was bowled out and he felt so angry to think that he had missed the ball, that he refused to go out and then there was trouble. The

game was spoilt, not only for himself but for all the others.

That boy was not playing in the sunshine. He was playing in the cloud of selfishness.

Had he been taking sunshine with his play, he would have gone out like a man, keeping a sweet temper, determined that next time he went in he would be more careful and get a longer innings.

Take a little sunshine with your troubles.

Even little boys and girls have their troubles, and it is very important to learn as early as possible always to bring your troubles into the sunshine.

I have heard troubles described as packing cases in which God sends His best gifts.

When anything is sent you by post or by rail, it comes packed up, and the first thing you do is to unpack it, to take off the dirty paper or break open the rough box, and see what gift there is inside.

When any trouble comes to you, let the first thing you do be to unpack it and find the gift inside. Look for the gift of God in every trouble and you will then be able to take even your troubles with a thankful heart. You will take sunshine with your troubles.

This is the way Doctor Garden takes the winds and the rains and the frosts, and this is the way in which, in spite of them all, he is always happy and beautiful.

"Take a little sunshine with everything."

YOUNG BEURRÉ DE MANLEY PEARS

VERY fine fruit is that which grows on a Pear Tree named "Beurré de Manley." There is something peculiar about this pear. When the blossom of a pear-tree has fallen and the young fruit is setting and developing, there comes a time when the fruit has to be thinned: some of it has to be taken off in order that what is left may be large and perfect. Young Beurré de Manley pears must be left to grow larger than most before they are thinned. When they have thus grown, it is very easy to tell which of the pears will develop into good fruit, and which will die off. The healthy little pears that will develop have a beautiful shine and polish on them. The little pears that will die off have no shine on them.

This is a parable.

The boys and girls who are going to grow and develop into good fruit in the Garden of God are always those who have a shining face. Where there is no shine in the face, no bright-

ness in the eye, there is only the prophecy of death.

What is the secret of the shining face?

It is the result of honesty.

A dishonest heart never lives beneath a shining face. There is no light in a dishonest eye. It cannot look you straight in the face.

It is the result of purity.

An impure heart takes all the shine off the face. Nothing does it so quickly. The face soon becomes as dark as the impure heart behind it.

It is the result of unselfishness.

A self-forgetful heart makes an unconsciously radiant face. Moses won his shining face when he asked God to destroy him instead of the people he led, the people who had sinned. Selfish boys and girls always have dull faces.

It is the result of a glad heart.

A glad heart makes a merry countenance—a happy, shining face.

But a really glad heart is never known except

in the companionship of Jesus. So a shining face is—

The result of friendship with Jesus.

Your own face becomes shining when you look into the shining face of Jesus. The reading of God's Word and Prayer makes Jesus very near and produces a deep friendship with Him, and then there comes such a shine in the face, such a light in the eye.

I once heard the question asked: "What is a boy worth?"

The answer given was this: "A boy is worth the light in his eye." The shining face is the evidence of future usefulness. But the dull face means death.

THE RAGGED EDGES

WHAT do you think is the most trying work in the garden?

Perhaps some of you bigger boys have gardens to look after. What answer would you give?

The answer I should give is this:—Cutting the edges of the grass, keeping those ragged edges tidy.

You may cut the grass with the mower and it will look well tended but for those edges. You cannot get *them* tidy with the mower, they must be cut with the shears. Often when I have used the mower, and have got a little tired in so doing, I have been tempted to leave those ragged edges. And yet those edges spoil the look of the whole garden. When I have managed to overcome my disinclination and have cut them, I have said that that work, though disagreeable and trying, pays best. It adds the finishing touch. It just makes "very good" into "best."

In our hearts and lives the thing last done,

and often never done at all, is the keeping tidy of the ragged edges. We can get clear of the greater things, but the little things that require the shears are often forgotten.

These ragged edges spoil the life. They make all the difference between a nice boy and a good boy; a man and a gentleman; a woman and a lady.

I expect you could tell me some of the ragged edges in your life, couldn't you?

Little acts of disobedience done in secret; little untruths that, like the worms, bore through and spoil the good wood of speech; little exhibitions of bad temper that, like the small hairs on the nettle, sting and poison; little acts of selfishness that, like the garlic in a nosegay, spoil the fragrance of the home-comradeship. These are some of the ragged edges that mar the beauty of the garden.

Have you ever thought that the exquisite beauty of the character of Jesus is entirely owing to the fact that nowhere was there a blemish in His life.

Don't stop short of perfection. Strive for perfection and nothing less. Be as St Paul who said: "For His sake I have lost everything and count it as refuse, if I may but gain Christ and be found in union with Him."

MAKE FRIENDS WITH THE BIRDS

WHAT would a garden be without the Birds? If there were no Bird-music in the garden, I think the flowers would grow sad; I think the Rose would become our Lady of Tears.

No one who works in a garden and whose heart eyes have their vision, can keep his love from overflowing to the birds.

Often as I watch them do I feel a longing to take them into my hands and relieve my heart by fondling their sweet, happy little faces and glad wings and then letting them go to the sunshine again, bearing within their hearts the light burden of my love.

Only the other day, a little sparrow flew right into my study. It did not seem afraid. It allowed me to pick it up and fondle it, and then I took it to the window and away it flew. And it did not seem afraid. Why should the birds be afraid? I do not like to see the birds fly away from me. I want them to feel safe with me. I want them to know that I love them and care for them. I think my birds do

know. I always think that if Jesus came into my garden the birds would know Him and not one would fly away from Him.

How can anyone kill the birds? Many years ago when I was a thoughtless boy I had a new catapult of which I was very proud. I "showed off" by shooting at a bird. I killed it. I shall never forget how dark a cloud came over my heart as I saw it fall. I would not pick it up. I do not think I ever cared again for my catapult, or that I ever used it.

How people can kill birds for feathers for ladies' hats, and kill them in such a cruel and thoughtless way, is more than I can understand. I am equally at a loss to understand how any one can wear the feathers so obtained.

Boys! don't be cruel to the birds. Don't treat them thoughtlessly or throw stones at them. Make friends with the birds. Feed them in the cold winter mornings and watch them with an intelligent interest. You will then soon find growing within you a love for these beautiful creatures of God which will make you tender and thoughtful towards them at all times. You will begin to understand the message of the Birds, which tells of "a Life, a Presence like the air, scattering its gladness without care."

GRASS

I

WHAT, in the garden, is most like a company of boys and girls? A lawn. Why? There are many reasons, some that you will like and some that you will not like.

Because of its freshness.

There is something about the restful, fresh greenness of a well-kept lawn that unconsciously lifts one's spirit out of all tiredness. It is so fresh, full of life, unfaded, unexhausted. It is young and has about it all the best qualities of young life.

So there is something always delightfully fresh about boys and girls. There is the untroubled and contented gladness of young life, buoyant spirits, living anticipation—all so fresh and unspoilt. Guard your freshness carefully. Live on the banks of the river of gladness that flows from the Throne of God.

Because it needs constant attention.

And what needs more attention than a company of boys and girls? I expect some of you are wishing that people would not think you needed so much attention. This is one of the reasons I knew you would not like. Yet it is true. For as the lawn is constantly having the seed of many harmful plants settle on it, and would soon be quite spoilt if left to itself, so especially upon boys and girls, evil seeds come—the possibilities of harmful things—and if left to yourselves, you would soon be ruined for all that is of the highest and best.

Because it grows best under discipline.

That is another reason you will not like.

If you have a lawn and want it to be as perfect as possible, cut it very often and keep it well rolled. Solomon said: "Spare the rod, spoil the child." He would have been equally wise had he said: "Spare the roller, spoil the grass." Grass and boys and girls grow best when they are not allowed to have their own way. This is true of everything in nature, so when you are next under discipline, say to yourself that you are only coming into line with all that is beautiful, and repeat my proverb: Spare the roller, spoil the grass.

GRASS

II

I AM giving you my reasons, you will remember, why I think that a Lawn is that in the garden which is most like a company of boys and girls. I gave you three. To-day I will give you three more. Each of these is a reason you will like.

Because it has such wonderful power of growth.

If you were to measure all the lengths of grass cut off by the machine, you would find that not far short of six feet of growth was made in perhaps less than six months.

You boys and girls have also a most wonderful power of growth. Only God knows to what you may grow. With proper cultivation of body, mind, and heart, there is nothing in the world to which you cannot attain. Remember this and work and hope with all your might.

Because every blade of grass has its own drop of dew.

If you go out early in the morning you will see the most magnificent sight. You will see upon every blade of grass a drop of dew hanging, shining like a diamond in the sun. It is thus that God nourishes the grass. And every child has all the help from God that is needed if only he or she will take it. Some will not take the help and they soon wither and lose their beauty.

Because it makes a walk very easy and comforting for tired feet.

Even little children may make life easy for those who have walked along its hard paths for a long time and have grown tired.

I shall never forget how once I had been for a long walk on a hot summer day, and the hard, hot, dusty road had made my feet very tired and sore, and then, just at the end of the journey, I had to cross some meadows, and how I revelled in the soft, cool, comfort of the grass! When Father and Mother grow very tired with walking the hot, hard, dusty roads of life, you boys and girls can charm away all the weariness if you will, with your tender love and kind words and sweet thoughtfulness.

THE WATER-LILY

I

IT has been my delight this week to go through the most beautiful private garden I have ever seen. To describe its loveliness to you is impossible: to tell you all I saw would take too long. One thing especially attracted my attention and filled my thoughts:—the beautiful water-lilies.

My first feeling as I looked at those blossoms and saw them growing out of the mud and floating upon the dirty water was one of wonder.

"How wonderful," I said, "that such a beautiful, clean flower should come out of such dirty mud and water."

Then a beautiful lily-blossom told me this story.

There was once a little lily-bud that forced its head above the mud and looked at its surroundings. When it had got over the first shock of the view, it found sufficient breath to say: "OH!" (such a long, long OH it was). "OH! I don't like this. How can a flower, a

FLOWER if you please, how can a FLOWER grow in such a home? It can't be done. I'm not going to try. If I were a nasty, slimy mud worm, perhaps it could be managed, but I'm a white flower, at least that is what I am meant to be at last, a beautiful, white flower, and to be in such a home! no, I shan't try."

Just then Lovely-Lily-Blossom, hearing the words, looked down at the grumbling little bud and said: "Come, you must not say such things. 'Can't' and 'shan't' are bad words and show a bad spirit, besides, they are very foolish words. Do you see me? Am I not a 'beautiful, white flower'? And haven't I come out of the mud and water? Am I not standing quite close to you in the mud? Well, then, you *can* be what you are meant to be, a beautiful, white flower. Just grow."

And the grumbling little bud became very quiet and began to grow. But soon the little bud began to find it hard to grow. Big fishes knocked it as they passed. Heavy rains came and washed still more mud down into the pond, and although it tried hard to say nothing for a long time, at last it broke out again with: "OH! I can't grow. How can I grow? The fishes are rough, the water is muddier than ever: please Lovely-Lily-Blossom, you told me to

'just grow' but how can I 'just grow'? I don't know."

Then Lovely-Lily-Blossom turned to the little bud and answered: "Didn't I hear you say 'can't' again? And didn't I tell you that was a bad word and showed a bad spirit and was a very foolish word? You can grow, and I will tell you how. Do you see that big, white light that is strong enough to be seen even down in the mud?"

"Where?" said the little bud, "I can't see it." "No," answered Lovely-Lily-Blossom, "and you never will that way. Hold your head up and look right up—right up straight. Now can you see it?" "Yes." "Well, just keep looking towards that light and you will 'just grow' beautiful." And the little bud lifted its head up and held it up and looked towards the light and began to feel very, very happy at once.

And it grew fast and soon it had grown nearly to the top of the dirty water. Then it began to feel the movements of the winds, and soon its long neck ached with holding its head up, and it began to look down again into the muddy water.

As soon as it looked down it began to feel very sad, and then it said: "Oh! (such a very, very long 'Oh') I can't go on holding my head

up. It is so hard and my neck does ache so, and what is the use of it all? I shall still be in the dirty water."

Then Lovely-Lily-Blossom, hearing the complaint, said: "What! Again! Didn't I hear you say 'can't' again? Have you forgotten what I have twice told you, that 'can't' is a bad word and shows a bad spirit, and is a very foolish word? Hasn't your experience told you this also? And didn't I hear you say, 'What is the use of it all?' I will tell you the use of it all. Hold your head up and keep looking towards that light and very soon now you will be a Lovely-Lily-Blossom, and then the use of it all will be that you will make this dirty pond look very beautiful because of your beautiful presence floating upon it." So the little bud held up its head again and kept looking, looking towards that light and soon opened into a Lovely-Lily-Blossom itself with a heart of gold that floated on the water, changing its surroundings into a very beautiful place.

Just then some boys and girls came running down to the edge of the pond and said: "Look! Look! There is a new Lovely-Lily-Blossom, isn't it beautiful? Doesn't it make the pond look lovely?" And the new Lovely-Lily-Blossom heard and was glad.

THE WATER-LILY

II

THE Water-Lily is a fine illustration of the Christian idea of "REST." It grows in mud and often in very dirty water, yet it lives its beautiful, fragrant, white, golden-hearted life resting quietly above it all. It gives one that sense of "living above" which is only known by a heart at rest.

It is the emblem of the rest of faith.

It floats upon the water but it holds fast at the root. It has gripped that from which it springs, so there is quietness and peace at the roots of its being. It matters not what storms come, even if the beautiful white petals are wounded and torn, it yet is at rest in its essential and vital part.

Faith is the action of a heart that holds itself fast by its roots in God. To have faith is to have gripped God from whom we take our being. Such a heart-grip means rest. Such a heart-grip means that whatever difficulties

may come to us, whatever storms of sorrow may blow upon us, even if the petals of our Life-flower are wounded and torn, we yet know perfect rest within our souls, in the vital part of our being.

Do not think that because sometimes the petals are tossed about and perhaps bruised and torn, there is not rest beneath. The deepest rest often lies beneath the most torn and sorrow-marked Life-flower.

Jesus was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He was bruised. He was wounded. "His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men. He hath no form or comeliness, and when we shall see Him there is no beauty that we should desire Him." So says the great prophet Isaiah. Yes, indeed, the petals of his Life-flower were tossed about, sore bruised and torn, yet He said: "Come unto Me and I will give you rest. Learn of Me and ye shall find rest." And even at the sad last He gave to His disciples what He called "My peace."

It is the emblem of the rest of a perfect, loving confidence.

When the Water-Lily wants to sleep, it closes its petals and draws itself under the water. The

great poet Tennyson had noticed this, for in one of his poems come these beautiful lines:—

> "Now folds the Lily all its sweetness up,
> And slips into the bosom of the lake:
> So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip
> Into my bosom and be lost in me."

The only way of perfect rest is the way of a perfect confidence that comes by faith: a loving confidence that folds the self quite up and slips into the bosom of God.

Confidence is that trust in God which relies entirely upon Him for everything. It is the motion of a heart that knows that God knows, and because God knows, forgets itself and its anxieties folding itself up and resting in Him.

May God grant to you the knowledge of the rest of the Water-Lily.

HOW TO GATHER HONEY

DO you know how to gather honey? I was in my garden one day and God showed me the secret.

I was watching the flowers and noticed a Bee very busy at its work. Soon it settled right in front of me on a flower. The flower was an Antirrhinum—what boys and girls call "Snap-dragon," or sometimes "Bunny-rabbit," because it is so like that animal's nose and mouth.

This is how it went to work.

It settled upon the underlip of the flower and its weight caused the flower's mouth to open wide. Then the Bee climbed right down the throat of the blossom to its heart, and the under lip closed up while the Bee was working away down at the heart of the flower getting the honey. When it had got all it wanted, it forced its way out backwards, then flew away to another blossom.

Then God said to me: "Did you see that? The Bee lost itself in the flower in order to get the flower's honey. If you want to get the

honey, the sweetness, the very best out of everything, you must lose yourself in it."

So many of us miss the best in life because we are content to move about on the outside of things. Only those who take the trouble to work their way into the heart of things know how sweet and rich life may be.

The only way to get into the heart of anything is by putting your heart into it.

Suppose you want to get the best out of Arithmetic. Some of you think that is a difficult matter! Put your utmost effort into it, put your heart into it, lose yourself in it, and then tell me what you think.

So with all work at school. You can only get the honey out of school by being yourself IN school while you are AT school. By putting your heart into it.

Or again, take something very different from work. Take the holidays. Many spend holidays who never get the best out of them. They move about on the outside of holidays, that is all. They do not get the honey out of them because they do not get into the heart of them. They set out to satisfy themselves first. They spend their time selfishly, forgetting everybody else, indulging themselves freely in

every way. To get into the heart of holidays however, you must get into other people's hearts. You must lose yourself in making other people glad. This really means that you must use your Rest time, your holiday, in getting closer to God. Rest time is not Rest time unless the heart, in Rest time, finds God and rests in Him.

That is how to get the honey out of holidays.

Again, think of that most important part of life, helping others. Many people help others but they get no honey out of it. They do it in a kind of "off hand," patronizing way. They do not give themselves when they give their help. They do not put their hearts into it and they never know how glad a thing it is to help another.

If you want to know how wonderfully rich in honey helping other people is, give your whole heart to it for Jesus' sake and you will be surprised what a wealthy blossom you have found in God's garden.

> "Who gives himself with his gift, helps three;
> Himself, his suffering neighbour and Me."

This is the secret of gathering honey. Get into the heart of everything by putting your whole heart into everything.

SUMMER DUST

WE were thinking in the Spring-time of March Dust. Now the Spring has gone and Summer has come—Summer with all its leaf-glory, its flower beauty, its welcome warmth, and still the Dust is with us.

But there is much difference between March Dust and Summer Dust. March Dust helps the Shrubs and Trees to live; Summer Dust chokes the life out of them. Summer Dust settles thick on all the leaves and then the leaves cannot breathe and the Shrubs and Trees are choked. Some are strong enough to fight for breath and to get sufficient to keep them alive, but others are weak and they die.

Summer Dust comes into the heart-garden just as the March Dust comes, but Summer Dust in the heart-garden soon spoils everything.

March Dust, we said, was little, sharp-cutting, disagreeable difficulties.

What is Summer Dust?

Summer Dust is the little, easy, not-much-to-be-noticed sins.

Little acts of thoughtlessness; little spiteful words and looks; little exhibitions of temper; little thoughts that are not quite holy and Christlike; little untruths; little tale-tellings; little deeds that are selfish; little things remembered that ought to be forgotten; little things forgotten that should have been remembered; little disobediences; little lazinesses; "don't cares," "shan'ts" and "won'ts"; all these little things make Summer Dust and choke the beautiful things in the heart-garden.

How shall we get rid of it.

When I see anything in my garden covered with Summer Dust I give it a bath. Sometimes the rain comes and washes it for me, but generally when there is much dust there is no rain. Then I use the garden hose and wash all the leaves so that they may breathe and live.

When the Summer Dust settles in your heart-gardens, you must wash the leaves, you must bathe them in Prayer. Nothing but Prayer will wash away the Summer Dust from a heart-garden. Prayer gives the leaves a chance to breathe; it keeps the Trees and Flowers alive when life is hot and dry.

There is no Summer Dust when Prayer is plentiful.

THE DAISY

I

WHICH of all the flowers that grow, do you think is the little children's flower? I know which you will say: The Daisy. Yes, you are right. The Daisy is the little children's flower, and no sight is more winning than that of the dear little girl with her hands full of her dear little Daisies, or of some chubby, little Angel-face with its Daisy-chain and its Daisy-coronet.

Common but much loved.

This little flower is one of the commonest and yet it is very much loved. Why should not the common things be most loved? Do they not deserve our love most? Yet strangely we think we can afford to despise the common and love only the rare. How different are God's thoughts in this matter from ours! One great glory of God's heart is that He loves the common. Jesus came for the sake of the common boy and girl.

You are common boys and girls but never

forget you are very much loved—much loved by Father and Mother and by God.

But no boy or girl is a "common" boy or girl to Father and Mother! No, that is because a loving heart can see in the common, the uncommon. That is why God loves the common boy and girl, because His loving heart gives to His eyes the power to see in you what others cannot see.

When you despise the common it is because your eye has lost its vision by your heart losing its love.

Common but very modest.

While the Daisy is such a common flower it is yet very modest. "So it ought to be, seeing it is so common," you say. Yes, but therein the common Daisy shows something of its uncommonness. Very often pride is the mark of commonness. Common people are often the most conceited, while they, of all people, have nothing to be conceited about. A conceited boy or girl generally has very little in either head or heart.

Common but very beautiful.

Then the common Daisy is very beautiful. Like a star amidst the grass its beautiful face shines out.

There is no reason whatever why common things should be thought ugly or made ugly. There is no reason why a common boy or girl should not take a self-respecting interest in his or her appearance and dress. There is no reason why common boys and girls should not make the common home life very beautiful. There is no reason why a common life and character should not be transfigured into the likeness and glory of Jesus.

Jesus came to make common things beautiful until at last the uncommon beauty of the Lord Jesus shall be the common beauty of men.

THE DAISY

II

I WANT this morning to talk with you again about the Daisy. There are yet three things to be said.

It is a compound flower.

Those of you who know something about Botany, will know that the Daisy is called a compound flower. It consists of many little flowerets held together in a hand-like cup.

That is what you boys and girls are. You are a compound flower—many boys and girls held together in the hollow of a hand. You are many little flowerets, making one lovely flower, the flower of childhood, held together in the hand of God.

And none can pluck one little floweret out of God's hand. Will you always believe that? Will you ever believe that you are always safe held in the hollow of God's hand and that whatever may come to you it matters not, for

God has hold of you and will never let you go? If you will begin now to weave the colour of that belief into the Petals of your Life-flower you will know a beauty in your life which will make glad every place wherein you may dwell.

It is the day's eye.

Do you know that the word Daisy is really a shortened form of "Day's Eye"? It was called the Day's Eye because it is wonderfully sensitive to light and darkness.

Whenever a big cloud covers over the sun, the Daisies shut themselves up. They can only open all their beauty when they are living in the sunlight. This is because each little Daisy has only a very little honey in it and it has very carefully to safeguard its sweetness. God has made you like this flower. You are our Day's Eye. You are meant to live and unfold all your beauty only in the sunlight of the company of Jesus. You have a little sweetness in your heart which must be very carefully guarded. It is so easy to lose the sweetness, the honey from the life. Guard it with every care and keep it secure so that none of the rain-storms of life can wash it out.

The Daisy

It is most beautiful when trodden on.

The last thing about the Daisy is what I love most.

It shows its most beautiful side when trodden upon.

All its little petals are under-tipped with red, and when it is trodden on, it grows all rosy and fair.

This is something that Tennyson had noticed, for one of his choice verses reads :—

> "I know the way she went
> Home with her maiden posy:
> For her feet have touched the meadows,
> And left the Daisies rosy."

Will you learn this lesson? Always show your most beautiful side when you are trodden on. When people treat you to disagreeable looks, words, and deeds, never grow disagreeable yourself, but always show your beauty and love. You will only be able to do this by keeping the underside, the hidden part of your life, your heart, beautiful, by living always in the sunlight of the Company of Jesus, by being such a Day's Eye that shadow and storm shall not be able to rob you of your love.

THE WHITE ROSE OF SILENCE

IT is so impossible to set forth the charms of the Rose that it has come to be the symbol of Silence. So some have said.

Others have said that the White Rose is the symbol of Silence because it was sacred to Venus the goddess of Love, and was consecrated by Cupid the god of Love to Harpocrates the god of Silence, in order to bribe him never to speak of the loving desires of Venus.

However it came about, in the language of flowers, the White Rose speaks of Silence.

The White Rose of Silence should always grow in our heart-gardens, for silence is essential to happiness.

When the White Rose of Silence grows we do not talk about each other's faults. This silence about faults is never found except where the soil of the heart is rich enough to grow so beautiful a flower. So you may always know whether your heart-garden has good soil in it or not, by the way you treat the faults of others.

We do not reply to the hasty words spoken

in an irritable moment, when the White Rose blossoms.

We do not repeat things spoken unwisely by others or tell idle tales, when under the charm of the White Rose.

No, the White Rose of silence seems to have the power of absorbing into itself, of losing and forgetting all those unpleasant things that we know it is best to forgive and never to notice.

In the centre of the ceiling of ancient dining halls there used to be engraven the White Rose. This gave a message to everyone, who, being friendly with the master of the house partook of his food at his table. The message it gave was: "Remember that you are now under the White Rose, and that whatever may be said or done here should never be mentioned outside." Whether you can see it or not, the White Rose is always engraven in the centre of every home, and its message to every member of the home is: "Remember to be silent concerning that which happens in the home." No boy or girl with any real sense of honour will ever betray the home secrets. He or she will always live under the White Rose.

THE ROTTEN APPLE

THERE is a Dutch and Spanish proverb that says: "A Rotten Apple spoils its companion." That is a saying which is the result of observing that in an apple store, a bad apple, if it be left, soon communicates its badness to those next to it. We have an English proverb that conveys the same meaning: "Evil communications corrupt good manners."

If you want to guard your heart-garden, you must never become friendly with a bad boy or girl. By that I mean you must never be the companion of such an one, because companionship with an evil heart makes your own heart evil. The Rotten Apple spoils its companion. Even companionship with one whose thoughts are not good will have its effect upon you. Your thoughts, all unknown to you, will begin to be of the same character.

It is so concerning companionship with one who uses slang and bad words. You cannot help becoming slangy and evil in speech if you are constantly listening to such utterance. The

tongue picks it up unconsciously and before you are aware of it, your speech is spoilt; it has lost its purity.

Companionship with one whose deeds are evil is equally dangerous. You cannot become the companion of an evil-doer without almost unconsciously yourself drifting into evil-doing.

And your manners are very soon spoilt when you associate with one whose manners are rough and unrefined.

In every sense of the word, the Rotten Apple spoils its companion.

Keep clear of the Rotten Apple.

A WATERED GARDEN

TWICE in the Bible there is a promise given to certain people that they shall be as "a watered garden."

Jeremiah says of those who have been redeemed by God: "Their soul shall be as a watered garden."

Isaiah says: "If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; and if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light arise in obscurity, and thy darkness shall be as the noon day: and the Lord shall guide thee continually and satisfy thy soul in drought and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters fail not."

Although the words of Isaiah are more, and sound very different from those of Jeremiah, yet both writers mean the same. It is the redeemed life, the life that is saved by Jesus, that is like a watered garden.

What does it mean to be like a watered garden?

Being natural.

A watered garden, in the finest sense, must be a garden watered by the rains. There is a great difference between a rain-watered garden and a garden watered by hand, by a hose from a tap. A hand-watered garden has something artificial about it. A rain-watered garden is perfectly natural. A redeemed life is a perfectly natural life. There is nothing artificial about it, nothing forced. It is just itself. Trust in Jesus and be yourselves. Don't try to copy others. Let your mind and heart powers grow naturally under His guidance.

Being living.

A watered garden always gives one the impression of abundant life. Everything in it seems alive, active, sprightly, sensitive. One feels a comradeship with the flowers and trees in a watered garden.

And a redeemed life is a living life, not a life that merely exists. Every power in it is acting, sensitive, responsive.

Being growing.

A live thing must be a growing thing. Nothing lives that does not grow. Nothing grows that does not live. If you say you love and trust Jesus and yet you are not growing in the Christian Life, you have made a sad mistake.

Being healthy.

Where there is life and growth there is also health. Health is that state of being in which all the parts and organs are sound and in proper condition. A healthy life is a healed life. A healed life is a redeemed life. It is a life that believes in and trusts entirely in Jesus.

Being contented.

A watered garden always gives one a sense of contentment. Everything in it is satisfied. There is no plant or flower that is calling out for something it has not got and cannot get. There is sufficiency.

Is not this so with a heart that trusts in Jesus? Jesus said: "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink." In other words: I will satisfy him. He shall gain a contented soul.

Being upward-looking.

In a well-watered garden nothing hangs its head, dry and parched and weary. Everything looks upward, adoring.

So, again, is a redeemed life. Every part of it looks up; nothing looks down. All of it is alive to righteousness and sure of sufficient grace and strength.

Being glad.

Nothing seems so glad as a watered garden. There is about it the quiet, strong gladness of a heart at rest.

And if you are trusting wholly in Jesus, you must know such a deep, quiet gladness.

Thus you see, a promise to be as a watered garden is a very wealthy promise. It is a promise always fulfilled in the lives of those who are redeemed by Jesus. If the promise is not fulfilled, it is because the life is not redeemed.

Every redeemed life is natural, living, growing, healthy, contented, upward-looking and glad.

NOT EVERY GRAPE ON THE VINE

IN the old law-book of the Children of Israel this precept was written :—

"When ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape in thy vineyard : thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger."

The land that the Israelite tilled was not his own. It belonged to God ; and as owner of the land He commanded what should be done with its produce.

Our gardens are not our own. They belong to God and He commands us concerning their produce.

Are we not breaking the law of God when, growing vegetables, fruit, and flowers, in the garden, we keep all for ourselves and our own pleasure, never thinking of giving any away to the poor and needy? Surely we can always leave some wheat in the corners of the field, and a bunch of grapes on the vine!

But I do not think that many of us keep all our garden produce for ourselves, do you? There is nothing we like so much as giving away our flowers to brighten other homes, giving away our fruit and vegetables to feed the hungry.

There is, however, a garden where we often pluck every grape on the vine—the garden of our own lives.

Some of us gather every bunch that hangs on the vine of "Kind Words," every bunch that grows on the vine of "Kind and Thoughtful Deeds," every little grape that grows on the vine of "Money." We do not think of the sad hearts that need the Kind Words, the tired bodies that would welcome the Kind and Thoughtful Deeds, the hungry bodies and poor homes that would be so thankful for a little Money.

This is all wrong, and grieves our Father in Heaven.

Our heart-gardens are not our own, they belong to the Lord Jesus. Let us, therefore, for Jesus' sake, share everything that grows in our heart-gardens, keeping nothing entirely for ourselves.

THINGS THAT MUST NOT BE GATHERED

YOU have heard of the flower called the Stitchwort. Down in some parts of Devonshire the people call it "Pixies," which is another word for Fairies. They say that its flowers must never be gathered because he who gathers them will surely be Pixy-led; he will place himself in the power of the Fairies so that they can lead him wherever they like, and this ends in the death of him who is thus Pixy-led. There is a plant which is called Fairy-Butter. It is a poisonous fungus, and the story says that the wicked Fairies make this butter at night and scatter it about, so that some may pick it up, eat and be destroyed.

There is a fruit known as the Thorn or Devil's Apple which grows largely in some parts of America. This apple is said to cause one to become insane soon after eating it. On one occasion some soldiers were sent out to Peru to quell a rebellion. Some of them picked these apples and in ignorance ate them. Soon they turned quite imbecile and remained so for

several days, spending their time, some in blowing feathers into the air, others in a sitting posture grinning like monkeys, and others again fondling their companions with countenances so comical that the most sober of those who had not eaten were provoked to mirth.

"What has all this to do with boys and girls?" you are asking. I will tell you.

There are some things growing in the garden that are not weeds but yet must not be gathered, for they are dangerous.

Boys and girls are often told to read books. Nothing can be better than the real reading of good books: lives of men, nature-books, science, history, and some stories. But sometimes you get hold of a book which Father takes from you when he sees you with it, and says that he does not wish you to read it.

I have seen some boys and girls make a great fuss over a thing like that; get angry, call Father names, and behave very unlike good sons or daughters. If this has happened to you, ask yourself why Father should wish to act so. He is good and wise and loving; he would not do a thing of that kind without good reason.

The reason is that some books which may look to you quite good and harmless, are bad,

very bad. They are among the things that grow and must not be gathered.

The same things might be said with yet stronger emphasis about pictures. Never try to look at some pictures; they are Fairy-Butter and poison whoever takes them into himself by his vision and thought.

This is true even of some games and pastimes.

They seem quite harmless, but they get such a hold upon you; they take up so much of your time and thought and interest, that the appetite for real, honest labour is lost and the character is ruined. There are many pastimes that are the fruit of the Thorn Apple Tree, and only the foolish and ignorant will eat of that fruit.

There are things in the garden that must not be gathered.

THE OLD BROWN ROOT

WHEN I came to live in this town I took a new house with quite a new garden.

While other people were at work getting the house fit to live in, I set to work to get the garden into shape and order.

Oh! the Thistles! The great Charge of the Light Brigade is the only thing worthy to be compared with my fight with the Thistles. For about three weeks I worked Thistles, I thought Thistles, I talked Thistles, and I dreamed Thistles.

But even among the Thistles God spoke to me. I was digging up the Thistles and all the Thistle Roots I could find. Some barrows-full did I lift of the white, curling, curving roots. But I noticed after a time that all these white roots sprang from old brown roots that lay buried deep down in the earth. I knew then that just digging up the white roots was of very little real use, and that if I wished to get quite rid of Thistles I must give all my attention to finding the old brown root and removing that. So after this, when-

ever I saw a white, curling, curving root, I was never satisfied until I had discovered its source and got out the old brown parent root.

And then God spoke to me among the Thistles and said: "Do you read and understand the Parable?" I said: "What Parable, Lord?" "The Parable of the Old Brown Root." And I answered: "What is it, Lord?" To which He replied: "In your heart there are many sins, and all these sins are the white, curling, curving roots; but down deep in your heart there lies buried an Old Brown Root of Sin and all your work on the white roots will be of little real use: you must get out the Old Brown Root of Sin, the evil principle that is the parent of all the white roots, before you will be quite rid of your sin troubles."

Then I said: "But, Lord, I cannot even find the white roots by myself, how then can I dig out the Old Brown Root?" "My arm," He said, "is not shortened that it cannot save. I can trace the white roots right down to their source and I can pull out the Old Brown Root for you." "But, Lord," I replied, "that will tear my poor heart and make it bleed." "Yes," He said, "it will; but blood means blessing and blessing means bloom, and if you

really want My blooms in your heart you will not mind the pain." Then I said: "Dear Lord, do with me as I am doing with my garden."

And although since then I have known the agony of the torn heart, I have known also all the time, a joy beyond all thought, a light-heartedness that cannot be expressed.

STILLNESS AT THE ROOTS

IF you came into my garden and kept your eyes open, I expect you would be sure to notice that all the young trees were tied up tightly to stakes in the ground: that all the standard rose trees were tied up to strong sticks thrust firmly into the earth: that many of the flowers also were tied to sticks in a similar way.

I wonder if you could tell me why that is! Why are the Trees and Roses and Flowers tied up and not given their full liberty?

Before I knew much about gardening I used to wonder why this was done, and one day, walking through a public park, I noticed some trees being planted, and with every tree was a strong stake. I said to the gardener who was planting the trees: "I suppose you put the stakes with the trees so that the tops should not blow about too much?" He laughed and said: "No, Sir, the stakes are not for keeping the tops steady but for keeping the roots still. If there is not stillness at the roots, things won't grow."

That was a lesson never to be forgotten.

If you want to grow you must be still at the roots. The roots of your life must be planted in God and you must be bound tightly to Jesus. What is it that binds me to Jesus and keeps the roots of my life still? Love to Jesus; trust in Jesus; hope in Jesus.

This threefold cord will bind you to Jesus so that there may be stillness at the roots and you may be able to take in nourishment and power.

Love gives birth to trust and trust brings hope with it. You cannot trust anybody you do not love, but when your love is given then your heart trusts and rests still. And in this life, as you grow older, you will realise more and more that there is no stillness anywhere save in a loving trust in Jesus.

But even a loving trust will sometimes be sorely puzzled at the strange and unexplainable things that occur, and then it is that hope comes to our aid and we hold fast to the confidence of our hope firm to the end.

Thus holding fast we grow, because there is stillness at the roots.

THE VIOLET

THERE was once a very beautiful boy named Attis, who was much loved by the goddess Rhea. As Attis grew older he did not return her love, but loved instead the daughter of the King of Pessinus. On their wedding day, just before the marriage ceremony began, Rhea appeared among the guests very jealous and very angry. So angry was she that she frightened them all and caused Attis to flee away into the woods.

When in the woods he found that Rhea had so hedged him in that he could not get out, and in his terrible grief at having thus lost his loved one, the King's daughter, he cut himself about with stones until he killed himself; whereon he was turned into a Pine Tree—a tall, sad, melancholy Pine Tree, in whose branches the wind ever moaned and sobbed. While he was cutting himself with the stones and running through the wood his blood kept falling on the ground. Wherever his blood fell there sprang up Violets. Hence Violets speak of Faithful Love.

The Violet

Here is a very beautiful though rather sad little story that I cut from the newspaper when it happened.

The little Irish boy and his violets.

On the night that Queen Victoria died, the sad news, you know, was telegraphed everywhere, and, of course, to Dublin. In a little while the evening papers were printed to tell the people about it, and a newspaper seller went to his stand in one of the Dublin streets, and spread out his placards at the side of the road.

A little shrimp of a bare-footed boy stole up to read them. "Death of the Queen" was the only one he saw, for it filled just the whole of his big, tender heart and his eager little brain. He stood there with his hands in his knicker-pockets, dreaming and wondering and sorrowing.

All at once he remembered that he had just one penny in the world, down in the corner of one of those pockets. The only penny he had, but it would just buy a bunch of violets; and he darted away to a flower-seller not far off, and changed his penny for the sweet little flowers. Then he came back, fondling them all the way along, and being so tender over them until he reached the placard.

He untwisted the string, and one by one laid

the little violets all over the word "Queen," and stood looking at it again, with his eyes quite full of tears.

A gentleman had been watching him, and came up and asked him what had made him do it. The little chap said, "I didn't seem as if I could help it, because I loved her so, for she was always so kind. My two brothers are soldiers out at the war, and she was always so good to her soldiers." Presently the gentleman went on, and the little boy turned to cross the road. But his eyes must have been very blurry with the tears of his loving little nature, for he didn't see where he was going.

Before it had time to pull up, a passing cab knocked him down and the wheels went over him. Almost at the same time a waggon lumbered by on the other side, and one of the heavy wheels went over the violet-strewn "Queen" on the placard, crushing the poor little flowers. It almost seemed as if the child's sweet spirit was carried up to Heaven on the sweetness of the crushed violets he had placed there in love of the "Good Queen, because she was always so kind."

It seems very right to me that violets and love should thus go together. They seem bound to each other by a cord of three strands.

The Violet

A shy flower and a shy grace.

The violet is a very shy flower and loves to hide itself in the grass and leaves. Love is a very shy grace ever seeking to keep itself out of sight.

This is why love never talks about itself, never advertises itself, never tries to draw attention to its beauty or its expression.

When you see any boy or girl who seems to find it necessary to draw attention to his or her love, you may be sure there is not much of the real thing there.

Love works quietly and out of sight. In thoughtfulness, in carefulness not to give offence, in every quiet and unseen way love moves about its mission.

Mother does not find it necessary to tell you in many words that she loves you, does she? You know it by her many thoughtful and loving deeds. Do you find it necessary to be always saying in words to Mother, "Mother I do love you"? Or does Mother know it by your many thoughtful and loving helpfulnesses?

Would hide, but cannot.

Though the violet is so shy that it hides itself, yet it cannot be hidden. Though love is

such a shy grace that it always tries to keep out of sight, yet, try as it may, it cannot do so.

The violet is so fragrant that all the air around it says: "A violet is here." Often when I have been walking along the lanes I have stopped saying: "Violets are here." I had not seen one; I did not know previously that any were growing there; but the fragrance in the air could not be hidden.

Love is so wonderful an influence that everything about it cries out, "Love is here," although, all the time, love is trying to creep out of sight. Love has a secret pathway to the heart that has never yet been discovered. We only know love is there when it is there, and we find within ourselves something saying: "Love is here," and then all the life becomes fragrant as the air around a violet.

Love in the beginning and the end.

The violet blossoms and sheds its fragrance in spring and autumn, when the world wakens and when it sinks down to rest in its long sleep. Love is about us most in the spring and autumn of life.

Its fragrance is strongest and most evident when as little helpless babes we awaken into

life, and when, death's angel beckoning, we lie down to rest in the long, long sleep.

So all the common day of our life is clasped and jewelled with love.

God is love.

That is why when I go out into my garden and find violets there, I find God there also.

THORNS

I

HAVE you ever been out into an orchard to gather a basket-full of Mulberries? If you have, you will know that you never pick Mulberries off a Mulberry Tree. You are saying to yourselves: "Whatever does he mean? he surely is not going to tell us to gather Mulberries off an apple tree!" Well, no, I am not. I am going to tell you, however, that Mulberries are never ripe so long as they hang on the tree. As soon as they are ripe they fall to the ground. That is why Mulberry Trees are planted in grassy places—the fruit falls on the grass and is not hurt. So when you go out to gather a basket-full of Mulberries it is the easiest gathering in the world; all you have to do is to pick them up off the grass.

Have you ever gone out to gather Gooseberries? I never knew what spiteful things were until I had gathered Gooseberries! Those bushes seem to take a delight in catching hold of your hands, arms and clothes at every

possible chance. I do not know of any fruit more difficult to gather than Gooseberries. The difficulty is, of course, owing to the thorns.

It is about these and other thorns that I want to speak to you.

Most of the difficulty of gathering the good things of life is due to thorns of one sort and another. We are therefore not surprised to find that the Bible has much to say about them.

Strange as it may appear, there is no country in the world where more thorns grow than in the Holy Land. There is no place where more thorns grow than in the Holy Land of our hearts. These heart-thorns do a great deal of harm and cause very much hurt. Most people are very sensitive and the thorns pierce. Sometimes you come across people who don't seem to mind them; they are what we call very "thick-skinned" people. In the Holy Land the goats and camels live on the nourishment they get from the thorns. Their mouths are especially provided by God with hard membrane which enables them to eat and enjoy these thorns and thistles. I am told that it appears very strange to see a camel go up to a bush of big, thick thorns and bite off a mouthful of them and eat them with great relish. But we

are not goats and camels and we do not thrive on thorns.

Thorns harm and spoil the heart-garden and as we shall see, they are evidence that we are not thriving.

Next Sunday I will tell you about some Bible Thorns.

THORNS

II

TO-DAY we are to think of Bible Thorns. The Bible speaks of seventeen kinds of thorns, and likens many people to them. We will think of only six of the kinds.

1. *Sarabim.*

The prophet Ezekiel calls some people "Sarabim." This was a kind of thorn that was very stiff and refractory. Do you know what "refractory" means? It means sullen, perverse, disobedient, obstinate, stubborn and difficult to manage. Don't you know some boys and girls who might sometimes be called "Sarabim"?

2. *Gharkad.*

This is a thorn which bears a bitter, red fruit. It grows largely in the salt marshes and the Arabs call it "Wolf's Grapes."

Isaiah tells the people that in spite of all God's goodness they have only yielded a bitter

fruit in their lives which is like "Wolf's Grapes." They had been hard-hearted and wilful, refusing to go in God's way. As a result their heart-gardens bore "Gharkads."

3. *Dardar.*

This is a thorn which was also called "Tribulation." It has a fruit composed of bony cells with a prickly back. These are small and apt to get into the shoe, or between the sandal and the foot, and produce indeed a tribulation, a suffering to those who are unfortunate enough to so pick one up. Do you know what it means to be in tribulation because of the little troubles that get under the tender parts of the feet as you walk life's way?

4. *Poterium Spinosum.*

This is the Thorny Burnet that grows amongst ruins. When Isaiah says: "The thorns shall come up in her palaces," he means that the palaces shall be in ruins and that in them the Thorny Burnet shall grow. Ruined palaces in our lives, disappointments and failures, often cause the thorns of the Grumbling Thorny Burnet to grow. Have you never seen this thorn growing in your heart?

5. *Sirpad.*

This grows in neglected and desert places. It is very gummy, with a strong disagreeable smell. It is useless for food or fuel, but it has two good qualities, it makes very good brooms with which the natives sweep the floors of the native houses, the dust and insects being easily caught on the gummy thorns and so gathered up and taken away. And it grows on the rocky, dry hillsides and makes green what otherwise would be barren and brown. Now it happens that the beautiful and useful Myrtle grows on similar hillsides and the contrast between this worthless Sirpad and the beautiful, fragrant, flowering, fruiting Myrtle is brought out by the prophet Isaiah, when, in his vision of the glorious future, he says: "Instead of the Sirpad shall come up the Myrtle Tree."

6. *Kimmeshonim.*

These are little thorns and nettles. They are spoken of in Proverbs xxiv. 30, 31: "I went by the field of the slothful and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding, and lo! it was all grown over with Kimmeshonim, and they covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down."

There is no man so thorny—so full of nettles and thorns, as a lazy man.

Work hard, or you will be known as boys and girls whose heart-gardens are all grown over with Kimmeshonim.

Next Sunday we will think about English Thorns.

THORNS

III

TO-day we are to think of English Thorns. The first thing to be noticed is that they are all striking examples of failure. If there were no failure anywhere in nature there would be no thorns.

Rose thorns.

These are not true thorns, but prickles. They are only on the surface. They are not connected with the wood of the tree. You can break them off and leave no mark on the wood.

These surface thorns are easily overcome by care. They are the bad habits which can be cured by the use of a little thoughtfulness and carefulness.

Hawthorn and sloe thorns.

These are true thorns. They have a deeper origin than the prickles on the Rose. They are part of the tree and they cannot be removed without leaving a scar on the wood.

They are really buds and branches. A

branch, owing to bad soil or hard and unfavourable circumstances, does not develop, it produces no twigs or leaves, it becomes a thorn.

What might have been a beautiful thing and a useful thing, becomes ugly and harmful through lack of proper nourishment. Often in the Sloe you can see the different stages of the change going on, some branches bearing leaves on the lower portions and ending in spines.

Leaf and bud thorns.

Badly nourished buds become thorns and nothing else. In some leaves the middle nerve of the leaf absorbs all the green stuff and so becomes a thorn. In the Holly all the veins of the leaves become spiny.

Apple and Pear thorns.

Some plants which have spines in a wild state, as the Apple and the Pear, lose them when cultivated, in consequence of their being changed into branches.

Thorns make a very good hedge.

They keep people away from us. They keep even God from coming near to us. This

is very bad because it contradicts all the laws of God. All those laws are made in view of the fact that we are not to live alone, that we are to live with, help and encourage, one another. We are all meant to live together in God.

How then can we destroy these thorns?

How can we get rid of the thorns of bad temper, deceit, disobedience, selfishness, don't care, laziness and all the others? In the same way as we can get rid of the thorns in the trees. Thoughtfulness and care will destroy the surface thorns. Nourishment will get rid of the bad thorns. Prayer nourishes the heart and life so that the buds of powers may become branches bearing flower and fruit. We must be careful, however, to learn from the Holly not to let our strong points take up so much of us that they become objectionable thorny things.

Nourish your life well by the constant companionship of Jesus in Prayer and you will be a tree of the Lord's planting, bearing no thorns nor any hurtful thing.

NIGHT FLOWERS

AS you know, many flowers which remain shut during the day-time, open at night. Their beauty is only realised when darkness comes. It is then that they make fragrant the night air and make even the darkness welcome. Some are especially what might be called Night Flowers.

There is a Tuberose, the Germans call it Nachtliebste, which blooms at night and rays out from itself sparks of light.

But for the night this treasure of darkness would be unknown.

There is what is called the Night-blooming Catchfly. This is a very interesting plant. During the day no trace of it appears, but at about seven o'clock, when the shadows come, a remarkable change is seen.

As at the stroke of a Fairy wand, the little blossoms, sparkling like gems, are scattered thickly over the ground.

In God's garden there are Night Flowers—blessings—the beauty and value of which are

never seen or known until sorrow comes and the life is darkened.

There never comes a night in God's garden that does not bring its Night Flowers. This is a truth, which, if you could only grasp it now while you are young, would make a difference to your life such as you cannot possibly realise.

There never comes a disappointment to you that does not bring with it its Tuberose, its blessing, which by its rays of light will make the disappointment to you something over which you cannot mourn.

There never comes a great loss to your heart that does not bring with it transfiguring blossoms, blossoms which, sparkling like gems in the darkness, make even the loss worth while.

God never sends a darkness over your heart-garden which brings not with it its treasure-blessing—its Night Flower.

Therefore, if you are wise, whenever God sends any trouble to you, any disappointment, any sorrow, any night, you will look about in the darkness for God's Night Flowers.

THE CROSS AND THE CABBAGE

IF you go into some vegetable gardens and look where the Cabbages are growing and where some have been cut, you will find that the stump of the Cabbage is left in the ground and the top of the stump cut open in the form of a cross, like this : X.

I have often noticed this and have asked why it was done. I have been told that it made the stump sprout and grow again. But somehow that answer never satisfied me, because the Cabbage stumps in my garden sprout and grow without being cut.

It was a long time before I discovered the real origin of the custom. This is the reason for cutting the cross on the Cabbage stump.

It is a superstition that when so marked, the stump is secured against the plant demon who is always on the watch to injure gardens.

The cross on the Cabbage stump is only a superstition, yet it may teach us a real and valuable truth.

The mark of the Cross is a splendid safeguard in the heart-garden.

The cross means love.

We only know the fulness of love by the revelation of the Cross of Jesus, and where the mark of love is, the evil spirit cannot harm the heart-garden.

The cross means self-sacrifice.

Jesus gave Himself for us upon the Cross, and so became fruitful in saving men. The mark of self-sacrifice is the sure sign of fruitfulness. The place where we say "No" to ourselves—the place which bears the mark of the Cross—is the place of growth and of fruit-bearing.

The cross means submission.

Jesus taught us by His Cross the lesson of perfect submission to the Will of God. The Will of God is best, and when the Will of God is the only Will that rules in the heart-garden, no demon of evil can spoil the flowers.

The cross means victory.

"Be of good cheer," said Jesus, "I have overcome." Yes, wherever the mark of the Cross is there is victory over every demon.

That Cross of Jesus is the one and only thing that has ever completely vanquished sin, and when the evil one sees the mark of that Cross, he knows that all his power cannot harm or destroy.

THE WOUNDED ASPIDISTRA

SOME one has sent up to the Editor of the paper called "The Garden" a leaf of an Aspidistra. An Aspidistra is a plant that consists of many long, broad leaves that grow straight out of the root. The leaf sent up was marked and the owner of the plant wanted to know the cause of the mark. This is the explanation given.

"The mark across the leaf of your Aspidistra is no doubt due to an injury received when the leaf was quite young. When small, the leaves are very tender and easily bruised. Any damage done to them then may not appear serious at the time, but as the leaves grow, the injured part develops also, and the mischief becomes fully apparent. We cannot say how the damage was done, but it looks as though the leaf had been pinched when quite small or bruised in some similar way. As other leaves are going in the same way it is quite likely that all were damaged at the same time."

Do you read the lesson of the wounded Aspidistra?

Young life—boy and girl life—is very tender and easily bruised, and therefore there is need that you guard yourselves very carefully. Your young life may be wounded before you know it and when you do not know it. But afterwards, as your powers develop, the wounded parts will develop too, and then will come the sad knowledge that harm has been done.

Be very careful into what places you go.

Never go where evil is in any form. Keep out of every questionable building and away from every dangerous place. Don't walk aimlessly about the streets or loiter about street corners.

Be very careful what you hear.

We sometimes cannot help what we hear, but there is much that we can help hearing. We can generally keep ourselves from the company of those who would say things which we ought not to hear, and we can sometimes refuse to listen to what we know will be said.

Be very careful what you see.

"But I cannot help what I see!" Oh yes you can, very largely. You can train your eyes not to look at or see those things that are bad, and you can train your eyes always to see the good. Experiment, and prove what I say.

Be very careful what you think.

Never permit a bad thought to stay in your mind, and always refuse to let it enter a second time. Never turn your thoughts to a dangerous or bad subject.

Be very careful what you say.

Even one word thoughtlessly said may wound the tender leaf of your life. We need always to pray: "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips."

Be very careful what you do.

Never do anything that even looks bad. "Avoid the appearance of evil."

In all these ways—by surroundings, hearing, seeing, thinking, saying, and doing, your young

life-leaves may be wounded before you know it. Safe-guard yourselves, and never mind being laughed at for being very careful. It is better to be careful and unharmed than careless and wounded.

SPADE WORK

THAT work in the garden which requires the greatest muscular effort, which means the hardest and heaviest labour, is Spade Work —trenching as it is called—digging trenches and turning over and over the whole of the surface soil. It is hardest but it is most necessary. It keeps the soil from getting a hard, dry, and useless crust on it; it keeps the soil healthy and nourished; it lets into the brown earth the healthy air and warm sun.

He who would seek to cultivate a garden without Spade Work would be trying to do an impossible thing.

Spade Work is equally necessary in our heart-gardens.

Without it, there soon creeps over the surface of our hearts, a hard, dry, and useless crust. The heart soil gets stale and loses its productive powers.

It is wise, if you would cultivate your heart-garden properly, continually to trench its soil with new and living interests. New interests let the sun and air in. They keep you from

thinking you are steadfast when you are only stuckfast.

Always have some spade-book-work at hand.

Boys and girls at school are apt to think themselves very big when they declare that they hate books. To speak so is to show your own foolishness and ignorance. Among the very best friends in life are books. They do some of the finest trenching in the heart-garden and no one can afford to neglect them. A wise gardener will value Spade-Book-Work.

Always have some spade-fellow-man-work at hand.

"Whatever does he mean by Spade-Fellow-Man-Work?" some of you are asking. I mean work to be done for and with your fellows. This is human living interest and is very necessary for proper heart-garden cultivation. It keeps the hard crust of a useless selfishness from forming on the heart soil. It is wonderfully powerful in letting the sun and air into the garden ground.

Always have some spade-hobby-work at hand.

Have you a good Hobby? You ought to have. You need to have. You cannot afford

to be without the relieving and recreating interest of a Hobby. My garden is my Hobby. It has been to me a great blessing. It has kept me healthy and interested when otherwise I might have grown diseased and without interest. Everybody has or should have some spare time, and nobody has any right to waste it. It should be used for Spade-Hobby-Work. Thus all times—work times and play times—may help towards the cultivation of our heart-gardens.

Don't be afraid of Spade Work. Even Spade-Hobby-Work if properly done leads to some very heavy labour. It all helps to keep interest alive in life. It keeps us growing and thinking. It keeps us busy, and busy hands are happiest and safest.

A GOOD RIME YEAR A GOOD FRUIT YEAR

THERE is an English proverb that says: "A good rime year a good fruit year."

Rime is frost, hence "a good rime year" means a year with plenty of frost, a cold year, a hard year, a year when the fingers ache and the eyes water and the teeth chatter in the frosty air.

Such a year, says the proverb, means a good fruit year. Can you tell me why? It is because the hard frost kills the eggs and larvæ of the moths which are laid in the trees, so that when the fruit-buds develop and the fruit sets, it is not destroyed by the grubs and maggots.

A good rime year in the heart-garden means a good fruit year there also. Rime in the heart-garden—what is it? It is the hard, unsympathetic, unkind, difficult and trying experiences of life, the experiences that tend to chill your tender feelings and try to freeze up your sympathy and love.

"If that be so," you say, "can the proverb

still be true?" Yes, it is still true; for, taken properly, these hard and cold experiences kill off many a harmful thing within us and about us which otherwise, like the grubs of the moths, would destroy the setting fruit.

I cannot tell you what these things are in you that need to be thus destroyed; you will learn that, if you try to live with Jesus. I think I know some of the harmful things in my heart-garden that have been destroyed by the cold experiences I have had, and now I am even thankful for the frost that destroyed, although at the time it made my fingers ache and my eyes water.

The great lesson for us to learn early in life is that all things work together for good to them that love God. This is true although you may not realise it at the time.

Get hold of that truth, that belief, and never let it go, however hard the frost.

A good rime year is a good fruit year.

A WHITE WORLD

WHEN I awoke this morning and looked out at my garden, I looked out at a white world. All the earth was covered with snow. The grass was gone, the flowers were gone, the brown earth had all gone; everything was snow—soft, glistening, white, beautiful snow. My garden had put on its white garments. Under the white garments I knew the little seeds and bulbs were cosy and warm.

> " 'Tis the winter's snow-white showers,
> That protect the shivering root."

In the Bible there is a verse which reads thus: Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven; whose sin is covered.

In Welsh it reads: White is the world of the man whose transgression is forgiven; whose sin is covered.

He whose sins are all forgiven lives in a white world. His heart-garden has put on its white garments, pure and undefiled. Jesus has covered him with that promised garment which is "white as snow."

All the ugly things are lost under the beautiful white snow.

Even that old and nasty rubbish heap in the corner is no longer looking nasty and ugly. It is beautiful with the snow. Jesus does not put on to you a white garment of forgiveness that only partly covers you. The white garments that Jesus gives fit you perfectly, cover you all over. When He forgives He forgives all.

All the good bulbs and seeds in the heart-garden are safe and cosy and warm under the white garment.

It is only when our sins are forgiven—when we live in a white world—that every good possibility within us is warmed into life and preserved.

If you want your heart-garden to be the most beautiful and perfect heart-garden, bring it to Jesus and ask Him to clothe it with His promised snow-white garments. Then you will live in a white world.

MISTLETOE

Christmas

THERE is no lesson so well adapted to Christmas as that which is taught by the words: Despise not the day of small things.

Many have thought all through the ages that small things were not worth considering. The true wisdom, however, is never to treat anything as insignificant, unimportant or valueless.

To help you learn this lesson, I will tell you the legend of the death of Baldur the Good.

The god of Light of the Norsemen bore the name of Baldur the Good. He was beloved alike of gods and men. Without the brightness of his presence Asgard, the abode of the gods—of Odin, Thor, Freya and the others—would have been sad as Hades. Without his joyous blessing earth would have been dull and barren.

Great trouble, therefore, fell on the immortals when Baldur one day informed them that he had had terrific dreams, threatening him with deadly peril.

It seems that he did not possess the immortality which the Greeks ascribed to their gods. Therefore the gods of Walhalla (Walhalla or Valhalla was the palace of immortality inhabited by the souls of heroes slain in battle) at once resolved to use their magic arts to preserve to themselves and to men their favourite god.

His mother, Freya (whose name is commemorated in our word Friday) resolved to take an oath from all created things that they would not harm Baldur. The goddess mother met with a ready assent from fire, water, iron, wood, stones, earths, diseases, beasts, birds, insects, and poisons. One thing only escaped her spell.

There grew on the eastern side of Walhalla an ancient oak, attached to which, rooted in its gnarled branches, she perceived a tiny plant—a soft insignificant thing, with clean, white berries. Its apparent powerlessness to do harm caused her to pass it by.

Among the gods was one, the power of evil, called Loki, whose chief aim was to do mischief and to mar the happiness of the gods.

Of all the gods the one that most hated Baldur the god of Light was Loki the god of Darkness.

After the spell had been laid on all creation not to hurt Baldur, the gods used to try his freedom from harm by getting him to stand on the plains of Asgard and serve as a target at which some hurled darts and stones, while others hewed at him with their swords and battle axes. The spell worked well. Baldur was ever unhurt and it came to be considered as an honour paid to him when it was thus proven that he was incapable of receiving harm.

One day, the gods were thus assembled when Loki, hovering near unseen, gazed upon the strange sight. He saw the bright-haired god, Baldur the Good, standing in a circle formed by the gods of Walhalla. Odin stood looking on at the sport, while Thor threw at Baldur his mighty hammer which rebounded without hurting the youthful god. In his turn each god hurled missiles or levelled blows at Baldur who stood smiling at them erect and unharmed.

What could it mean? Loki, who would have rejoiced if every blow had told, was determined to find out. So changing his shape to that of a fair and queenly woman, he hastened at once to the dwelling of Freya.

The goddess received him graciously and enquired whence he came. "From the place where the gods are making a target of Baldur

the Good without hurting him," replied her false guest. "Aye," said Freya, "neither metal nor wood can hurt Baldur, for I have exacted an oath from all of them that they will not." "What!" exclaimed the guest astonished and dismayed, "have all things sworn to spare Baldur?" "All things," replied Freya, "except one little shrub that grows on the eastern side of Walhalla and is called Mistletoe. I thought it too young and feeble to exact an oath from it." A secret joy thrilled through the false maiden as she heard these words. Hastening away from Freya's dwelling as soon as she could, she flew to the spot where grew the fatal shrub. Then resuming his proper shape, Loki cut off the Mistletoe and hurried back to the plains of Asgard.

He found the gods still at their amusement. The god Hödur, who was blind, was standing a little apart and not sharing in it. Loki approached him and asked: "Why dost not thou also throw something at Baldur?" "Because I am blind," answered Hödur, "and see not where Baldur is, and have moreover nothing to throw." "Come then," said Loki, "do as the rest do. Show honour to Baldur by throwing this dart at him. I will direct thine hand to the place where he stands." Hödur

took the Mistletoe and under the guidance of Loki, threw it at Baldur, who, pierced at once by the dart, fell down lifeless.

The grief and rage of the gods at the cruel end to their homage was intense. They at once detected Loki in the deed and would have wrought vengeance on him then and there had they not been restrained by the sacred character of the spot on which the deed was wrought. Thus fell Baldur the Good by the dart of the uncharmed Mistletoe, by means of the one thing that was thought too small to be worthy of notice, too insignificant to do any harm.

(This legend is given in most books of flower-lore. I have taken it from *Flowers and Flower-Lore*, by the Rev. Hilderic Friend—a book, I think, now out of print.)

NEVER SAY TOO QUICKLY THAT A FLOWER IS DEAD

IN my garden there are three plants which, whenever I see them, say to me: "Never say too quickly that a flower is dead." One is a White Jasmine. One is a Passion-flower. One is a Rose. I planted them in the Autumn of last year.

When the spring came they showed no signs of life. May and June came and went and still there was no sign of moving life. Often during these months did I say: "I fear those three are dead." More than once I started to dig them up. But I held my hand from destroying them and patiently waited.

July came and, as I carefully watched, I thought I saw signs of life. I couldn't be sure, but I thought I saw faint colourings on the buds. By August I knew they were all alive, and to-day they are as good as any other plants in the garden.

All that long time they had been fighting hard for life against hindrances of which I knew nothing. Had I pulled them up, all their efforts would have been in vain.

Never say too quickly that a flower is dead.

Be very patient and long-suffering with everybody; wait quietly for signs of life. Never say of yourself or of another: "He or she is hopeless." We never know what difficulties have to be fought and conquered. There are more difficulties in human hearts and in the world than we can ever know, and many and many an apparently dead heart-flower is really fighting hard for life.

That there are no evident signs of life is no proof of death, and if we too quickly give up hope and cast them away, we shall be destroying good life, we shall be doing the work of an adversary, of a cruel and heartless enemy.

When life seems long in showing any sign, try to help and nourish and strengthen and comfort.

Never put an extra hindrance in the way. This means that you will need to learn from Jesus how to be very lovingly tender and very, very patient, even as Jesus Himself.

Jesus will teach you the lesson and give you every kind of strength needed.

Never say too quickly that a flower is dead.

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